

WIN
The Bows
That Won
The **TEST**
pg. 48

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MAY 2010

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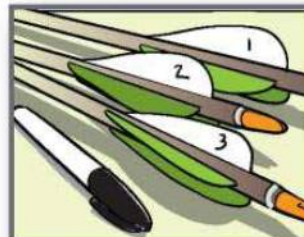
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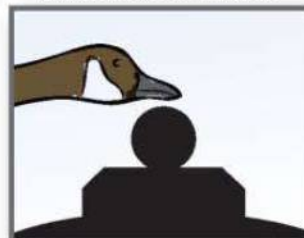
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57

From strengthening your shooting hand to properly sharpening your knives, OL's 101 tips on hunting, fishing, shooting and gear provide the ultimate cheat sheet for sportsmen.

MAY 2010 Vol. 217, No. 5

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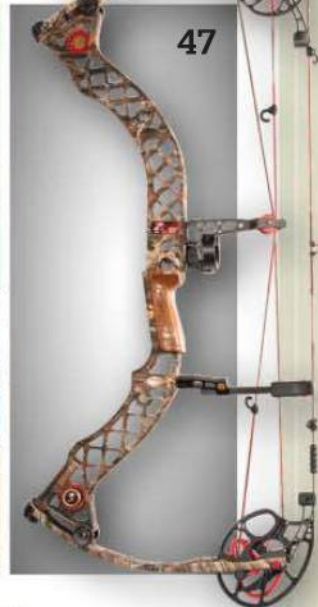
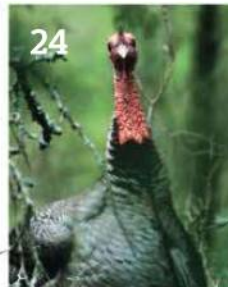
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Eddie Berman (hand)



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EDITOR'S Journal

Flint and Steel Basic fire building can teach lessons on life

BACK IN FEBRUARY, SOME FRIENDS invited my family up to their place in the Adirondacks for a few days of fun in the snow. One of the highlights was a hike we took a mile or two back in the woods to a secluded lean-to. The woods were a winter wonderland of snow-laden trees, and on one stretch, when I found myself totally alone, Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" came to mind.

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

The lean-to had a gorgeous view down the river and a stack of dry firewood beneath the roof. Our boys quickly went to work clearing snow out of the fire ring outside. They gathered kindling while I split some larger pieces. What really amazed me was how fast the two got a fire going—with just flint and steel. They've practiced fire building so often with our Scout troop that using a match would almost feel like cheating.

I saw them take dry cotton balls out of their packs and carefully spread the wadding out to make a nest for the sparks. I turned my back to split a few pieces of wood, and by the time I turned around, they were already laughing and high-fiving about the blaze they had going.

Lunch wasn't fancy—just hot dogs cooked over the open flames, hard salami (Dad's favorite) and sharp cheddar cheese. My friend surprised me with a bottle of ice-cold beer he'd stashed in his pack and we toasted the day as the fire crackled merrily.

Knowing how to build a fire out of nothing is an easy skill to learn. Our boys used cotton balls, but they have been equally successful using lint gathered from the dryer filter at home—just like Keith Sutton recommends in this month's "Sportsman's Cheat Sheet," on page 57. Everybody needs a cheat sheet, and even if you use only a few of our 101 tips, they're bound to make any hunting or fishing trip more enjoyable. And they're fun to share, too.

Want my tip of the month? Try building a flint-and-steel fire with your kids. For the cost of some dryer lint (and maybe a few hot dogs to roast), I guarantee you'll have a good time, and you'll be helping them to gain a confidence in themselves outdoors that they can't get any other way.



Todd W. Smith
Editor-in-Chief



Easy fire-building skills are just one of the 101 tips on our "Sportsman's Cheat Sheet."

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WHAT'S ON Your Mind



“This article got my son’s attention. Your guess is better than mine in terms of how he knew the gun in the photo was a ‘zombie gun’ from across the room, but he did.”

Zombie Fever I was pleasantly surprised to find the article “Zombie Guns” in the March Shooting section. Too often, outdoor magazines focus on the purity of nature, and come off as being too serious. Zombie guns was a great way to prove that you still have a sense of humor at *Outdoor Life*.

Will Kurtz, Littleton, CO

This article got my son’s attention. Your guess is better than mine in terms of how he knew the photo of the gun was a “zombie gun” from across the room, but he did.

www.dropjhook.com, via outdoorlife.com

At a time when we should be representing the shooting sports as a legitimate endeavor for ourselves and future generations, “Zombie Guns” [Shooting, March] fuels the fire of those who paint us as blood-and-gore seekers. I feel it’s important for sportsmen to try to create a culture, especially among our youth, that treats hunting and guns with respect—and teaches them never to point a firearm at a human. Yet, in the article, we see the encouragement of reckless indulgence in the macabre, celebrated by the icon of outdoor hunting and conservation journalism.

Dr. John B. Murnane, DVM, Great Falls, MT

Love the article on zombie guns! When the zombies come knocking, I’ll take the Remington 870 any day, with a Desert Eagle on my hip. You forgot about the AA-12. We’re going to need the maximum amount of firepower!

Big Lou, via outdoorlife.com

I know my zombie lore, and I know that you do not want those creatures getting close enough to bite you. African hunters going after wounded leopards and similar animals often favor a shotgun with 00 buckshot because 1 3/8 ounces of lead shot in a fist-size pattern (at close range) has true stopping power.

The Remington is okay, but I’d recommend having an Ithaca or older Winchester that will fire on each pump if you keep the trigger depressed. Any of the above with an extended magazine would work well against zombies.

Kody, via outdoorlife.com

Learning to Survive I just finished the March “Survival Issue.” When I saw that cover, “Make Fire! Plus 102 More Lifesaving Skills,” I couldn’t help but pick up the magazine. I admit, I am not the outdoors type, but the information in this issue was very useful.

Who knows, it might save my life someday. I am sending it to my daughters; the reading is a must for everyone. Thanks.

Dianne M. Werthmuller, Fort Smith, AR

(Continued on page 78)

Best of OL’s Blogs

A SELECTION OF READER COMMENTS ON:

Congressman Steve King Blasts Raccoon, PETA —outdoorlife.com/blogs/newsfound

“How many cold raccoons do members of PETA take into their homes during the winter?”

—The Captain

“Nice shooting, Congressman King.”

—Pittsburgh DeerH

“The felonious masked varmint got what he deserved.”

—seadog

“I thank God for people of influence for their courage to stand up and speak rationally and with common sense in the face of PETA’s ridiculous, non-sensical views.”

—Papa

“I’m a member of PETA: People Eating Tasty Animals.”

—giboandro

Makes me proud to be from Iowa.

—jlduis



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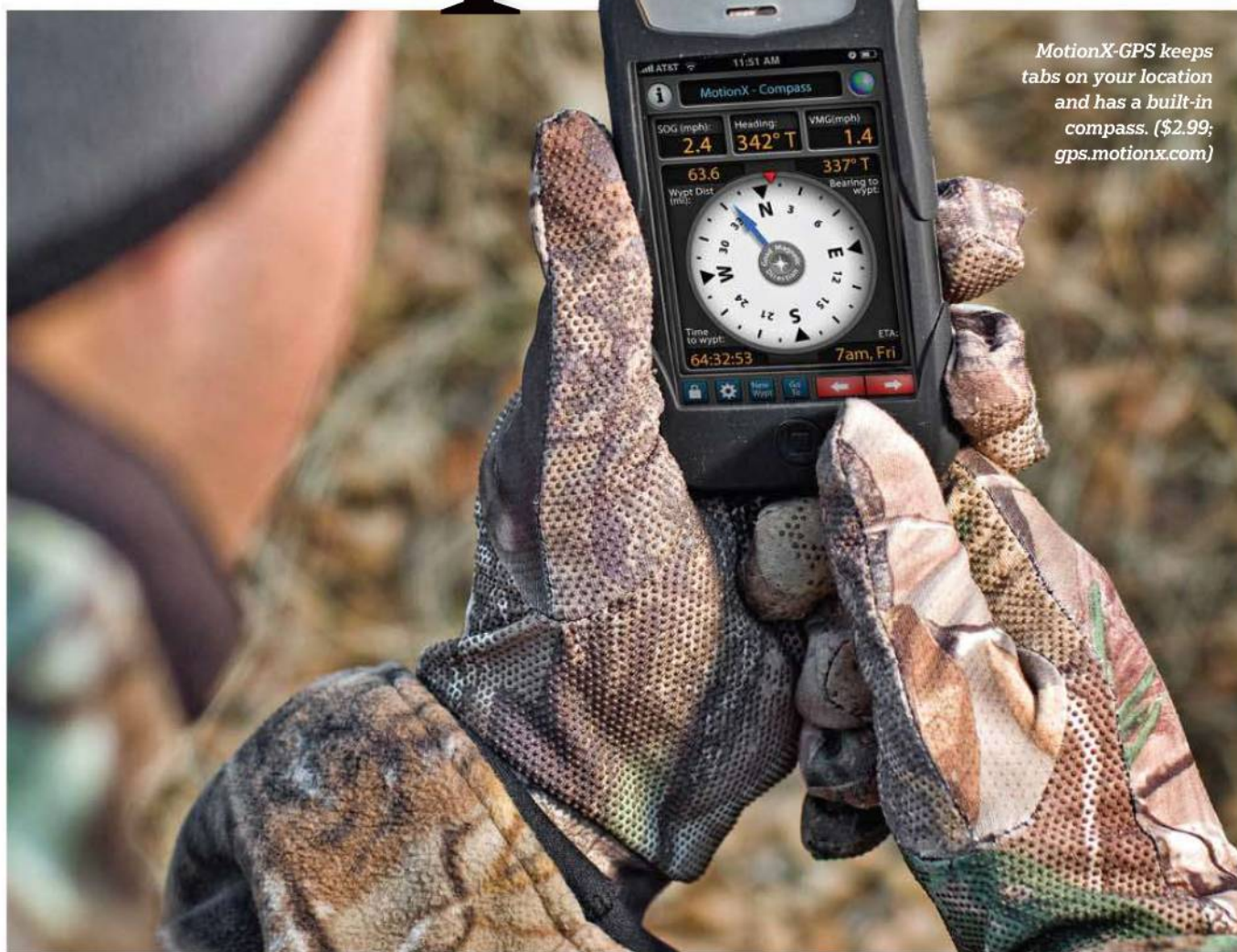
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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Hardcore Software

Smartphones feature apps for outdoorsmen **BY JOHN BURGMAN**

APPLE'S IPHONE AND OTHER MULTI-MEDIA smartphones might initially seem more suited for urbanites and techies, but there are many apps (basic software programs you download onto the phones) that make them great for our sports as well.

Apps can be bought for a modest price, which makes them enticing for budget-conscious sportsmen and trendy gearheads alike. Whether you want help deciding which lure to use on an overcast day or need to hear a sample of a pintail whistle, chances are there's an app that can assist you.

Some traditionalists might not see the benefit of bringing a smartphone on a hunting or fishing excursion. But while many apps are geared toward entertainment, others can be invaluable in certain situations. There are apps that provide packing checklists and apps that report your location to medical authorities. MotionX-GPS (pictured above) lets you check your position on a map and save waypoints. There are also apps for your most basic needs, like getting the forecast (AccuWeather) and splicing together your best grip-and-grin photos (AutoStitch). Turn the page for some of our top picks.

Apps to Pack

Enhance your trip or have fun on your stand with these smartphone programs



Utility

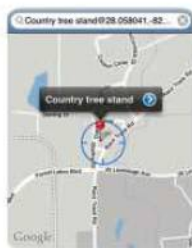
POCKET FIRST AID & CPR

Jive Media's Pocket First Aid and CPR app contains info on everything from bite treatments to severe cut and wound maintenance. **(\$3.99; jive.me/firstaid)**



WINCHESTER BALLISTIC CALCULATOR

This useful app, based on a Winchester website program, lets you compare load trajectories, among other features. **(free; winchester.com)**



Navigation

WHERE'S MY TREE STAND?

This app from Inner Four allows you to use your phone's GPS capabilities to record your favorite stand locations to find them easily in the dark. **(\$1; innerfour.com)**



TOPO MAPS

The Topo Maps app provides maps of rugged spots all over the U.S. and Canada. The best part? You don't need a signal once the maps have downloaded. **(\$7.99; topomapsapp.com)**



Entertainment

TIME TO HUNT

An app that tells you when wildlife will be most active is practical. But reading about all the factors influencing the activity is also a lot of fun. **(\$1.99; portablehole.com)**



PRIMOS HUNTING CALLS

With this interactive app from DataRiver, you can listen to calls from deer, elk, turkeys, ducks and a number of other critters. **(\$3.99; primos.com)**

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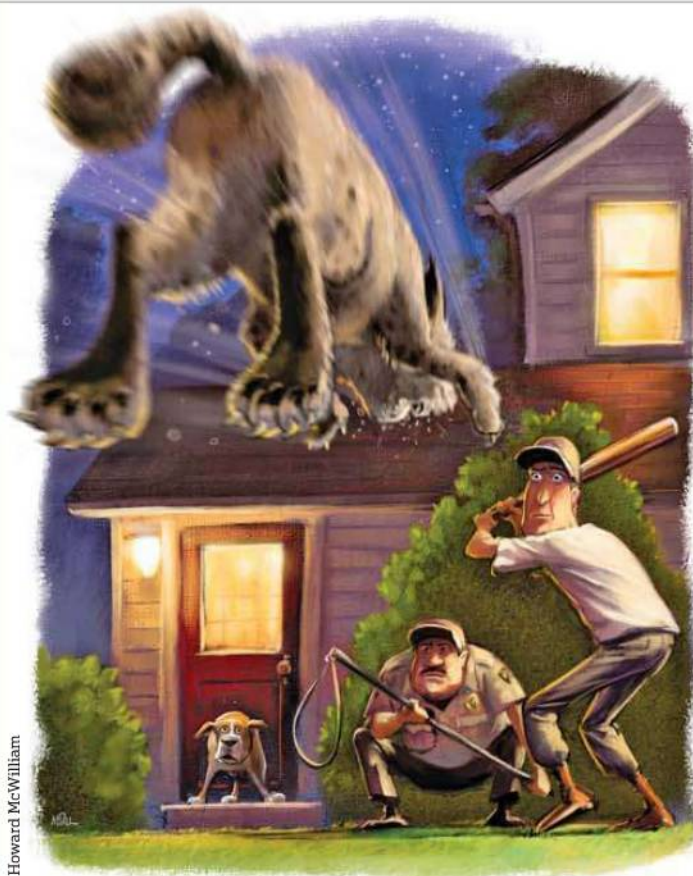
"Bat man" fends off wild bobcat

TED WILLIAMS WAS AN AVID fisherman. Mickey Mantle was a hunter. But the line between the outdoors and the baseball diamond was blurred more than ever when Scott Bassett used a baseball bat to defend himself from an attacking bobcat.

Bassett's wife awoke one night recently to a snarling bobcat threatening their pet dog outside their house in Montgomery, Massachusetts. She alerted Bassett, who tried to scare away the 33-pound cat. But the animal was unafraid and undeterred, according to MassLive.com, which covers western Massachusetts news.

An animal control officer was called to help dissuade the angry bobcat. But when Bassett and the officer suddenly found themselves on the receiving end of an attack, Bassett grabbed the closest weapon—a baseball bat—and swung for the cheap seats. Bassett connected with the animal, which later tested positive for rabies.

There's no bag limit for bobcats in Bassett's home state. And while a .22 might be a more typical choice for such small game, a baseball bat was the right tool at the right time.



Howard McWilliam



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Snapshots

SURVIVAL

Stuck With a Truck

A broken-down vehicle can provide lots of solutions in a survival situation **BY RICH JOHNSON**

WHEN YOUR VEHICLE DIES IN the backcountry, you might have to scavenge its parts to keep yourself alive. If you're willing to sacrifice the truck or SUV, there are many parts that provide survival benefits. For example, if you stay with the vehicle, the interior will serve as a shelter to protect against sun, wind and precipitation. However, in hot weather, the interior can become an oven. One trick is to use foliage or fabric to shade windows so you can take shelter inside the vehicle, leaving doors and windows open for ventilation. Here are a few more ideas for making use of the automotive parts.

1 MIRRORS Remove the rearview or a side mirror and use it to signal aircraft, hikers and others.

2 TIRES Deflate a tire (start with the spare) and add it to a fire to create massive amounts of black smoke as an emergency distress signal.

3 BATTERY Use jumper cables or other long wires connected to the battery terminals to strike a spark into dry tinder and start a fire. As a safety precaution, strike the spark as far from the battery as possible.

4 CARPET AND UPHOLSTERY Use carpet and floor mats as a ground

pad to sit or sleep on. Use upholstery material as a blanket, poncho, make-shift footwear or jacket, or to improvise shelter, shade and clothing.

5 HOOD Remove the hood and prop it up as part of a lean-to shelter.

6 WIRING Strip wiring from under the hood or dashboard to use as snare wire, and for binding material to tie items such as branches together.

7 FUEL AND OIL Drop a piece of cloth attached to a wire into the fuel tank to soak up gas for fire-making. Use oil on bits of foliage fed into the signal fire to create black smoke.



John Hafner



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BY THE NUMBERS

Flyfishing

More popular than ever **BY BRIAN McCOMBIE**

IT'S FLYFISHING SEASON, AND SPORTSMEN across the country are getting ready to wet a line. In 2008 alone, Americans made 100 million flyfishing outings and pumped millions of dollars into the local economies of river towns from coast to coast. Here are some more figures and statistics from Trout Unlimited, the Outdoor Foundation and other sources about fishing—on the fly.

800 pounds

Weight of the world's largest fly rod—a 60-foot aluminum and bronze model in British Columbia

6 million

Number of fly-fishers in the U.S.

734,000

Total number of flyfishers in the U.S. aged 6 to 17

\$19,500

Total amount paid for a 19th-century leather pot-bellied creel at a 2007 auction

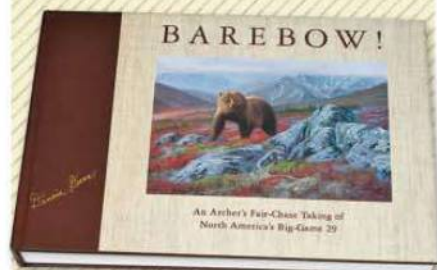
20.2%

Percentage of fly anglers who are female

READING ROOM

The Barebow Book

Wild tales from a famed North American archer



Dennis Dunn's *Barebow!* is a coffee table book that reads like an elaborately illustrated hunting memoir. The 500-page tome chronicles the years it took Dunn, an avid archer, to hunt North America's big-game animals with traditional archery tackle—no compounds and no sights ("barebow"). It's loaded with information on grizzlies, white-tails, caribou, pronghorns, cougars and bison, along with the rest of the animals that make up the 29 big-game species that can be legally hunted on the continent.

Dunn took all of the animals over the span of nearly half a century, which makes his reflections particularly impressive and noteworthy. Maps and taxonomic notes provide practical information to counter Dunn's nostalgia, and illustrations by outdoor artists Hayden and Dallen Lambson introduce each chapter.

This is a must-read for outdoorsmen interested in hunting big game on an extensive scale or anyone looking to spice up his trophy room with fresh reading material. (\$95; Documentary Media)

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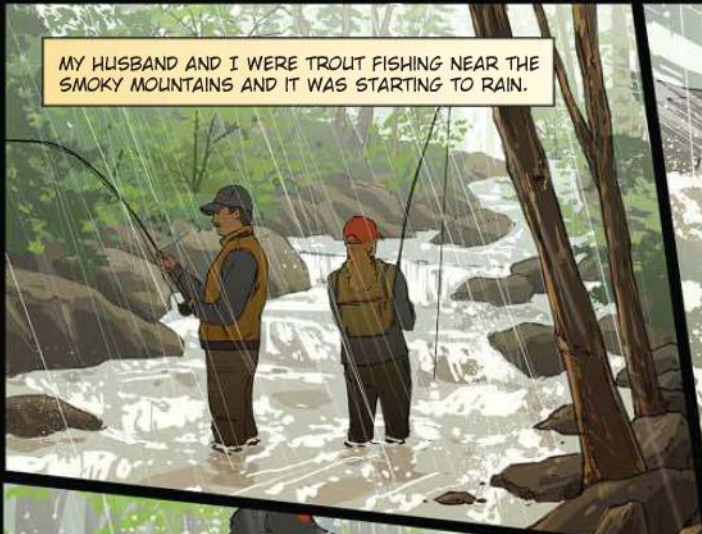


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Julie Livingston, North Port, FL


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I CAUGHT IT! MY HUSBAND HELD ONE END OF THE STRINGER AND I HELD THE OTHER. IT WAS A WILD RIDE, BUT **I WAS SAFE.**

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Illustration: CHARLIE GRIAK

U.S. GOV'T GOLD AT-COST

TODAY - The United States Rare Coin & Bullion Reserve has scheduled the final release of U.S. Gov't Issued \$5 Gold Coins previously held at the U.S. Mint at West Point. These Gov't Issued Gold Coins are being released on a first-come, first-serve basis, for the incredible markup-free price of \$125 each. This "at-cost" Gov't Gold offer could be cancelled at any time. Do not delay. Call a Sr. Gold Specialist today.

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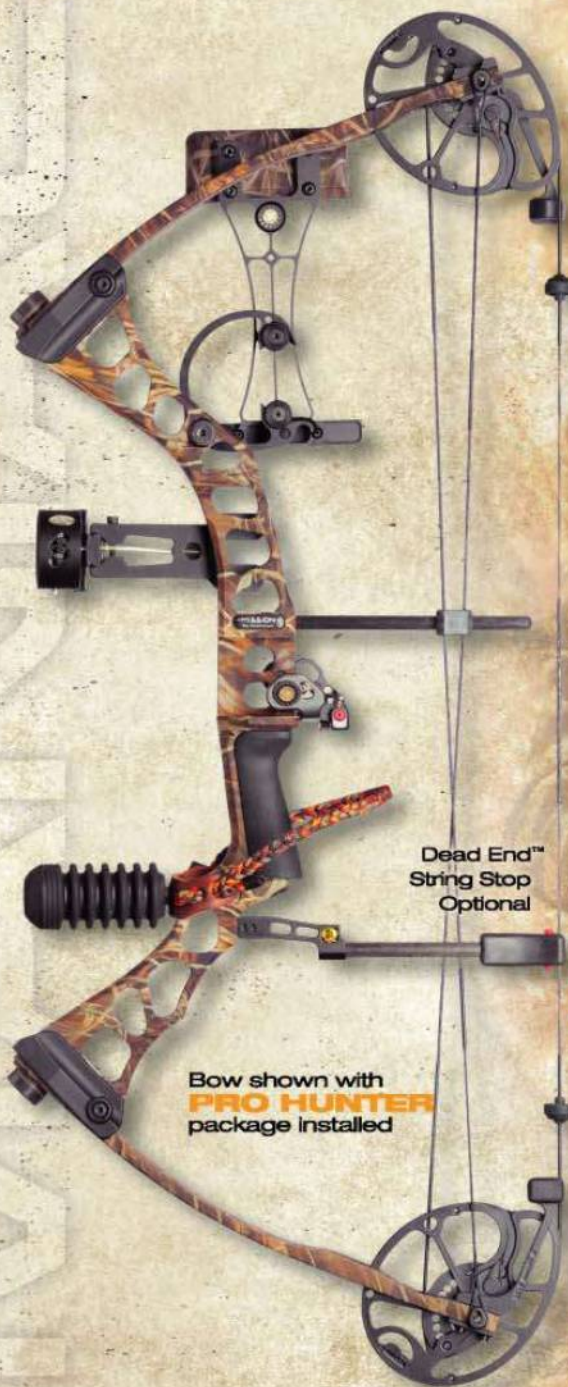
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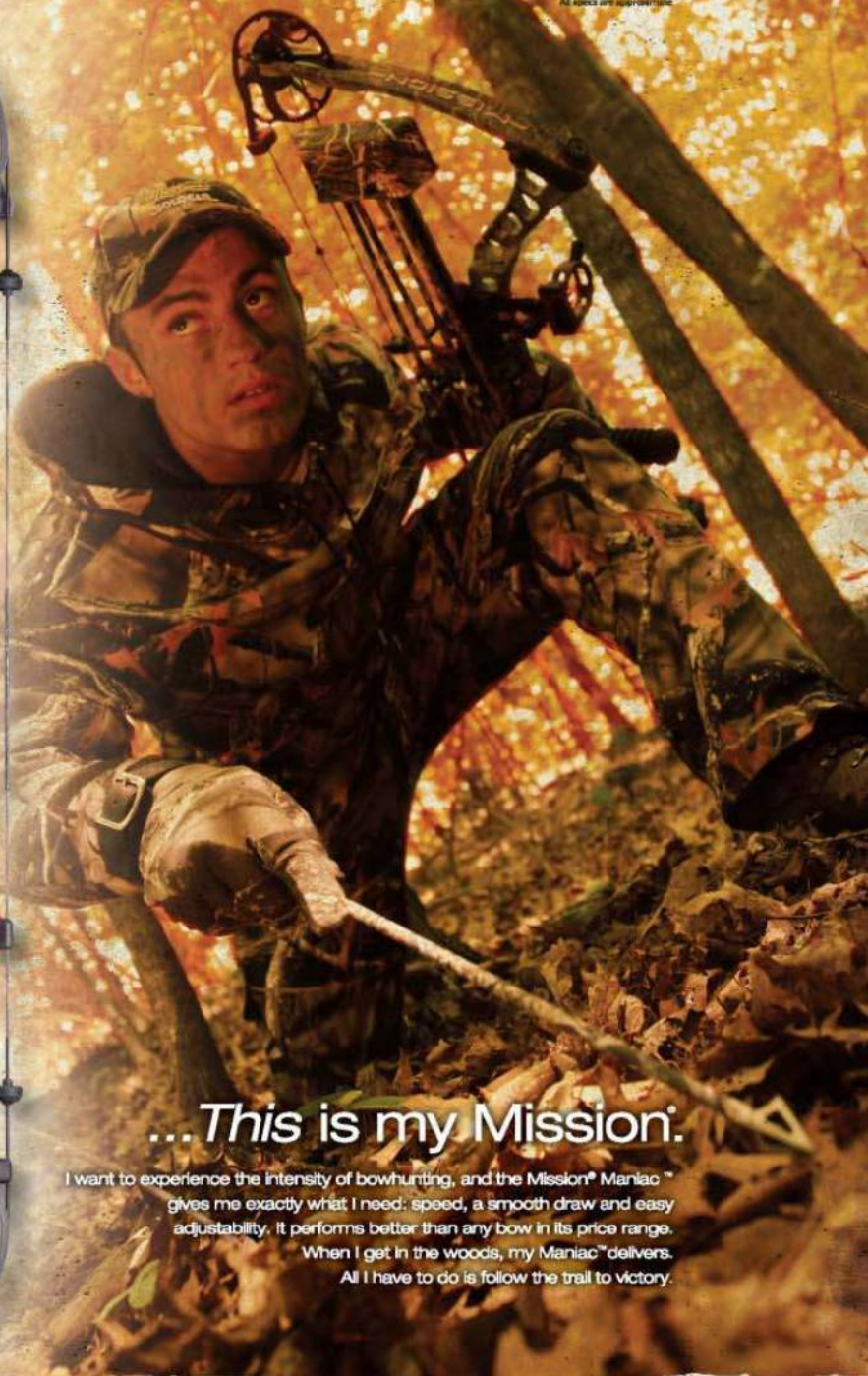
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60	PEAK WT.	64	62	62	61	60	58	56	53	49
	MIN. WT.	42	40	39	37	36	34	32	30	27
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Hunting

Tip of the Month: Make your own 3-D archery target with a hollow turkey decoy and a can of foam sealant. Fill deco slowly.



BUSTED SEASON

Missing in Action?

For many whitetail hunters, last fall was forgettable. Are you prepared to eat your deer tag this year? **BY BRIAN McCOMBIE**

NATE GRIBOWSKI HAS HUNTED THE same area of northern Wisconsin for a decade. Compared to other parts of the state, The Big North Woods around Hazelhurst doesn't hold huge numbers of deer. But Gribowski's hunting party always saw a

Hunting

good number of whitetails, and usually bagged a couple. Until last November's gun season. Gribowski's party of five hunted for five days. Only one shot was taken.

"I could tell on opening day that something was wrong," says Gribowski, 24, of Mosinee, Wisconsin. "I just didn't hear the shots like normal."

Actually, the 2009 deer harvest was well below average in a number of Midwestern and Eastern states. In Maine, for example, the 2009 deer kill was 14 percent off 2008's. New Hampshire, down 5 percent. Overall, New York's take was about even, though the harvest in northern zones dropped 15 to 20 points. West Virginia saw a 5.5 percent decline. Early returns indicate Michigan was off between 10 and 20 percent, and Minnesota saw a 13 percent dip in firearm harvest.

Wisconsin? A staggering 27 percent harvest drop, all seasons included, with 329,000 whitetails taken, versus 453,000 in 2008.

GRUMPY HUNTERS

Not surprisingly, hunters are unhappy. Game agency mismanagement and inaccurate population estimates get most of the blame. Predators, global warming and various conspiracy theories round out the mix.

One thing is clear, though. There are fewer deer over much of the landscape. Keith Warnke, Wisconsin's top deer biologist, says it's according to plan.

"We spent the prior decade working very hard at herd reduction," says Warnke. "And it worked."

Wisconsin entered 2000 with a record 1.8 million deer. Farmers, foresters and motorists wanted fewer deer. Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources responded with freebie antlerless tags and additional antlerless seasons, and even forced hunters in some units to "earn" their chance at a buck by first taking a doe.

The 2009 harvest decline, Warnke notes, occurred in the antlerless portion, where the DNR dropped the tag quota by nearly half to account for a deer herd estimated at just over 1 million following the 2008 hunt. The 2009 buck harvest was relatively normal, dropping only 3 percent from 2008.

FEWER ANTLERLESS TAGS

Wisconsin is not alone. In state after state, game officials have spent years boosting the antlerless harvest to lower overall deer populations. What we may have seen in 2009 was a "tipping point," where the momentum shifted in the other direction, with deer herds and harvests on the decline. Fewer antlerless tags may be the norm in the future.

The situation's a little different in Maine, where back-to-back terrible winters killed thousands of deer, says deer project leader Lee Kantar, especially in the north, where sheltering deer "yards" are disappearing.

Pennsylvania's deer harvest was off in 2009 (final numbers weren't available at press time). Like Wisconsin, Pennsylvania has taken an aggressive approach to lowering deer numbers, prompting hunters to assert the herd was in a tailspin. But Kip Adams, outreach manager for the Quality Deer Management Association, thinks a great mast crop hurt hunter success. On property he hunts in northern Pennsylvania, deer numbers have been increasing. Yet he saw only a handful.

ABUNDANT ACORNS

"It was the best acorn crop we've ever seen," says Adams. "The deer just didn't have to move far to fill up." He knows locals who spent thousands of dollars on high-quality food plots. "They weren't seeing many deer, either."

Yet Indiana had a record 132,700 deer taken last year. Maryland's 100,600 deer were also a record, while Missouri racked up its fourth-best deer kill ever, just missing the 300K mark. What gives?

Here's what gives. In states where harvest was way down last year, hunters will probably see a slightly better 2010 hunt given the recent mild winter. A state or two with high deer numbers might even set another record.

But with the concerted efforts going on in so many states to reduce deer populations via antlerless tags, the huge deer harvests of the recent past may well be over.

Population Estimation

Most states use some variation of the Sex-Age-Kill (SAK) method to estimate deer numbers. At registration stations, sex and age information is collected for each deer. Many states also plug in a fawn-to-doe ratio, based on summer observations, as well as a winter mortality rate. The mathematical model then essentially estimates the total deer population before the hunt.

However, notes Kip Adams, outreach manager for the Quality Deer

Management Association, part of the SAK's statistical validity was based on a very high percentage (80 percent or better) of yearling bucks in the harvest. These young bucks are then used to estimate the general composition of the overall buck population.

"But now, with so many states protecting these yearlings with point restrictions, the SAK model doesn't work as well as it once did," says Adams. —B.McC.



Many states have adopted phone-in harvest reporting, but the most accurate biological information is gathered at check stations.

Mitch Kezar/Windigoimages.com

TACTICS

Call In a Spring Bear

You can reel in a black bear with standard predator calls, but you have to put the emotion of an actor and the lungs of a marathoner into the effort. It's shock-and-awe calling at its most intense, says veteran game caller Wayne Carlton. "When you quit calling, the bears stop coming." **BY ANDREW McKEAN**



1 Canyon rims and creek valleys project your calling over diverse habitat and can have consistent wind flow. Another advantage: You can often watch incoming bears to judge their size and ensure they don't have cubs.



2 South-facing avalanche chutes are good early in the season, though Carlton has his best luck calling a couple of weeks following den emergence, as bears' diet shifts from grass to meat.



3 Logging roads are used as travel corridors by bears and a wide variety of their prey species. Watch your back—sometimes bears will come in quietly, even from downwind.

Must-Have Bear Calls

Pick easy-to-blow models with high-pitched screams



Mac Daddy Coaxer from Johnny Stewart blows doe, fawn and rabbit distress calls. Change pitch by depressing a lever over the latex diaphragm. (\$19; johnnystewart.com)



Primos Coyote Bear Buster reproduces the bleat of a fawn, a favorite prey of spring bears. It can also be effective for bobcats, coyotes and mountain lions. (\$10; primos.com)



Wayne Carlton Bear Call mimics cub and hog squalls and prey distress shrieks. The external reed is easy to blow for extended sessions. (\$20; hunterspec.com)

WHITETAILS

Record Quest

Outdoor Life gets ready to hunt the biggest bucks in North America **BY ANDREW MCKEAN**

FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS, I have been haunted by the memory of a single deer. This particular animal—an Oklahoma whitetail with a rack like a candelabra—occupied my life for maybe a dozen seconds, starting with his eruption from a tangle of hawthorn to his manic sprint for the property line and his disappearance in the shelter of a cedar grove. But I've replayed our brief encounter hundreds of times, wondering what might have happened (to both of us) if I had been holding a rifle instead of a 20-gauge stuffed with quail loads.

I've mentally measured his matching drop tines and counted his points—I get between 12 and 17, depending on how much running room I give my imagination—and sometimes picture myself holding his head, turning it to fully appreciate its astonishing dimensions, which I estimate at north of 200 inches of antler mass.

That single incandescent moment, on a sunny November afternoon in the breaks of the Cheyenne River, transformed me from a deer hunter to a trophy-buck hunter. For the rest of that week, I hunted that animal with single-minded purpose. I never saw him again, but I haven't been able to forget him, either.

I'm hardly alone in this consuming pursuit of trophy whitetails. It's a natural progression from shooting your first legal deer to holding out for a single, specific individual.

OUTCOME-ORIENTED HUNTING

Deer hunters are a social lot, often satisfied more with the experience than the outcome. Trophy hunters, on the other hand, are focused, intense, secretive and consumed with the result, killing the biggest buck. Every year.

This year, *Outdoor Life* is celebrating all the sacrifice, intensity and glory of trophy hunting with a brand-new program, Record Quest. It's the story of remarkable bucks, what it takes to kill them, interviews

with those who have, discussions of essential tactics and gear, trophy destinations, and details on how you can join this elite club.

TROPHY TALES

It's the story of the science of trophy management and the mysterious mix of genetics, nutrition and gleaming luck. It's a celebration of the wildness of wildlife, of the uniquely American notion that until you wrap your tag on it, even world-class bucks belong to us all.

We'll ask you to advise us on where to plant food plots and place tree stands, and to weigh in on the nail-biting risk of passing up a 160-class buck in order to hold out for a 180, which may not show up. You'll meet the most recognized names in trophy hunting, as well as hard-core hunters you've never heard of.

This fall, we'll ask you to come along as *Outdoor Life* editors put their skills to the test, hunting whitetails in some of the continent's best trophy areas. We'll hunt in Ohio, Montana, Kansas, Alberta and Missouri, and we'll invite you to participate online, at outdoorlife.com/record-quest, as we post daily updates from the field.

We might even return to Oklahoma, where that whopper buck of the Cheyenne River perhaps still roams—a few years older, a few inches larger and oblivious to the metamorphosis he sparked in me.



Non-Typical Record: This remarkable buck, discovered dead just outside St. Louis, Missouri, by a hunter in 1981, carries 333 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches of antler mass. The right antler has 19 scoreable points; the left antler boasts 25 points. It beat the previous non-typical record by nearly 50 inches.



Typical Record: Milo Hanson's 213 $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch world record was taken in 1993 near Biggar, Saskatchewan. Sporting an inside spread of 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the main beams have a matching length of 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Photographs courtesy of the Boone and Crockett Club—www.booneandcrockettclub.com

OUTDOOR LIFE

Record Quest

with Andrew McKean

OutdoorLife.com/RecordQuest



This season follow *Outdoor Life's* hunting editor, Andrew McKean, as he explores the science, tactics and in-the-field action of tracking and hunting record-class whitetails. Launching in April on **OutdoorLife.com** he'll be blogging, posting videos and photo galleries on topics ranging from deer herd management and nutrition to selection of tree stand location. In the fall he'll be updating the site live from the field as he hunts some of North America's top deer destinations.

OutdoorLife.com/RecordQuest

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SKILLS

Ready, Aim...

Two tips that'll make you a more effective shooter

1 Anchors Away

If you hit the kill zone on your target every time you let an arrow fly while you're on the ground, yet have missed a "gimme" shot on a deer from a tree stand, you might want to take a hard look at your anchor point.

No matter whether you've missed high or low, the fix might be in dropping your anchor point a fraction of an inch. One of the benefits of doing so is improved follow-through. It's common for archers to drop their bow hand unconsciously in order to watch the arrow make impact, which will cause the arrow to miss its mark. A lower anchor point will help you resist this urge.

When you're shooting from an



elevated position, it's also important to watch your form, bending at the waist in order to maintain proper body geometry and sight alignment. The goal is to keep the bow's alignment with your torso the same whether you're shooting at a downward angle from a stand or while flat on your feet on level ground.

—Paul Korn



2 Shoot a Gobbler With Your Off-Shoulder

When you prop your back against a tree during turkey season, you're making a bet that the tom you've struck will come from the direction in which your gun is pointing when you raise the barrel. As often as not, the gobbler struts in from some other spot, forcing you to contort your body to get into a better position, which frequently results in a spooked bird.

A better way is to **teach yourself to shoot from the off-shoulder**, which is going to feel as comfortable as a prostate examination for the first few times.

Overcome the awkwardness with **practice and repetition.** Standing as you would while shooting skeet, pick a spot on the wall and, in a smooth motion, **raise and lower the gun 10 times** to your off-shoulder, making sure you get a good cheek weld and that the butt of the gun is in the pocket of your shoulder. Do 10 to 15 sets a day, and within a couple of weeks the motion will feel natural.

If your non-dominant eye is now looking down the rib, also **practice closing your dominant eye** as you raise the gun. If you can't close one eye, top your turkey gun with a red-dot sight, so you can aim correctly. —John B. Snow

GUNS & LOADS

Cutting Edge Turkey Rig

Benelli's Vinci bags its first Osceola toms **BY TERRY GIBSON**

I GREW UP HUNTING OSCEOLA gobblers in heavy Everglades cover, rarely seeing an entire bird in the dense vegetation. So it would be a treat to hunt Florida birds near Orlando, in rolling hills of grassy pasture divided by stands of pine and cypress hammocks. Making the hunt even sweeter would be my choice of shotgun, Benelli's Vinci.

Inertia-driven speed

Benelli's in-line operating system cycles the semi-auto action with a single spring, increasing lock-up time and reducing fouling.

Drop-out trigger

The trigger assembly is contained in the forearm module. The straight-pull trigger breaks with minimal wrist torque.

Natural grip The ample "SteadyGrip" stock is available on Vinci's turkey configuration. The buttstock module can be adjusted for drop and length of pull in a matter of minutes, with no tools required.

Recoil reduction Benelli's "ComforTech" stock configuration soaks up recoil and keeps the butt tight to the shooter's shoulder, minimizing felt recoil. Recoil pads are designed to dissipate the kick over the shooter's entire shoulder.

Joe Coogan, Benelli USA's brand manager, invited me to test the state-of-the-art gun on gobblers at Frazier Family Farms, which sits on top of an ancient beach known as the Lake Whales Ridge. We would hunt over Cally Morris's Hazel Creek decoys, which are as lifelike as mounts. It would be cool to take an Osceola gobbler that, for once, I could actually see approach in the open.

DECOY ABUSE

The first morning, Coogan and I set hen and jake decoys about 20 yards out, three paces apart and facing quartering away. We watched the turkeys fly down from the roost about a half-mile away on the other end of the pasture.

A pair of toms walked down the opposite tree line, until they saw the decoys and made a 200-yard beeline for them as our guide, Wayne Shelby, quit cutting on his slate.

After the birds pecked the jake decoy to shreds and pounded its remnants



Watch Terry Gibson's thrilling Osceola turkey hunt unfold on a segment of "Benelli On Assignment," now airing on The Outdoor Channel.

into the ground, we put one bird down. The second gobbler started to run, but turned back around toward the decoy. I put the Burris Fast-Fire Red Dot on the base of his neck and squeezed, and the Federal Mag-Shok High Velocity load felled the other bird.

GENTLE ON THE SHOULDER

Within three days, eight other writers had similar stories to tell, and evenings were spent discussing the Vinci's merits, including its reduced muzzle jump and recoil. We were shooting stout turkey loads, but the recoil felt about like a standard field load.

For a Florida native like myself, accustomed to hunting the jungle gobblers of the southern Everglades, it was as great to actually see a hunt unfold as it was to tag an opening-morning tom and introduce a versatile shotgun to the spring woods.

Courtesy Benelli (gun); Terry Gibson (turkey)



No longer found on huge expanses of the American West, most of the country's bison are behind fences, raised for their meat. Only a handful of states issue licenses for truly fair-chase wild bison hunts.

CONSERVATION

Fair-Chase Bison

Sportsmen might have saved America's buffalo, but hunting opportunities remain rare **BY ANDREW McKEAN**

YOU CAN BUY BISON STEAKS in your local supermarket, snack on bison appetizers at upscale restaurants and even wear bison-leather loafers. But your ability to hunt one of America's most iconic big-game animals is still a privilege reserved for those with luck or wealth.

This year, 500 to 700 licenses will be issued by state wildlife agencies to hunt free-ranging bison. That includes Montana's hunt for bison that might roam out of Yellowstone National Park, surplus bison that graze on South Dakota's Custer State Park and free-ranging bison in southern Utah's Henry Mountains.

The number of state-issued bison tags continues to tick upward each year, but it's still a pittance, considering that 30 million buffalo once roamed America's Great Plains.

"We are no longer in the Dark Ages of bison conservation in America," says Dr. Kent Redford, lead scientist with the American Bison Society. Founded more than a century ago by Theodore Roosevelt, William Hornaday and other

celebrity conservationists, the outfit remains housed at New York's historic Bronx Zoo, home of the umbrella Wildlife Conservation Society. "I would say we're in the Silver Age. A lot of things seem to be moving in the right direction, but there's a lot to do."

Thanks to those pioneer conservationists, bison are no longer in danger of becoming extinct, and there are enough animals—an estimated 500,000—in various herds to ensure genetic diversity.

But 95 percent of America's bison are in captive herds, being raised for meat, and most of those bison have some percentage of cattle genes, according to Redford. "Ecologically, bison are not recovered, when you consider the small number of animals that are free-ranging and wild," he says.

So on the centennial of the creation of the American Bison Society, a group of biologists and conservationists reconvened and drafted a bison restoration plan for the next 100 years.

"Our efforts are to try to dramatically increase over the next century the number of bison that are considered wild or conservation animals that are to be hunted or observed, but not being raised for meat," says Redford. "We are promoting the idea that bison are wildlife, not livestock."

A HANDFUL OF BISON HUNTS

Wyoming issued 385 bison licenses in 2010, mainly for animals that roam out of Jackson Hole's National Elk Refuge, where the herd size is estimated at 1,200 head.

Montana issued 36 tags for the 2009–10 season for bison that wander out of Yellowstone National Park, whose herd is estimated at around 3,000 head.

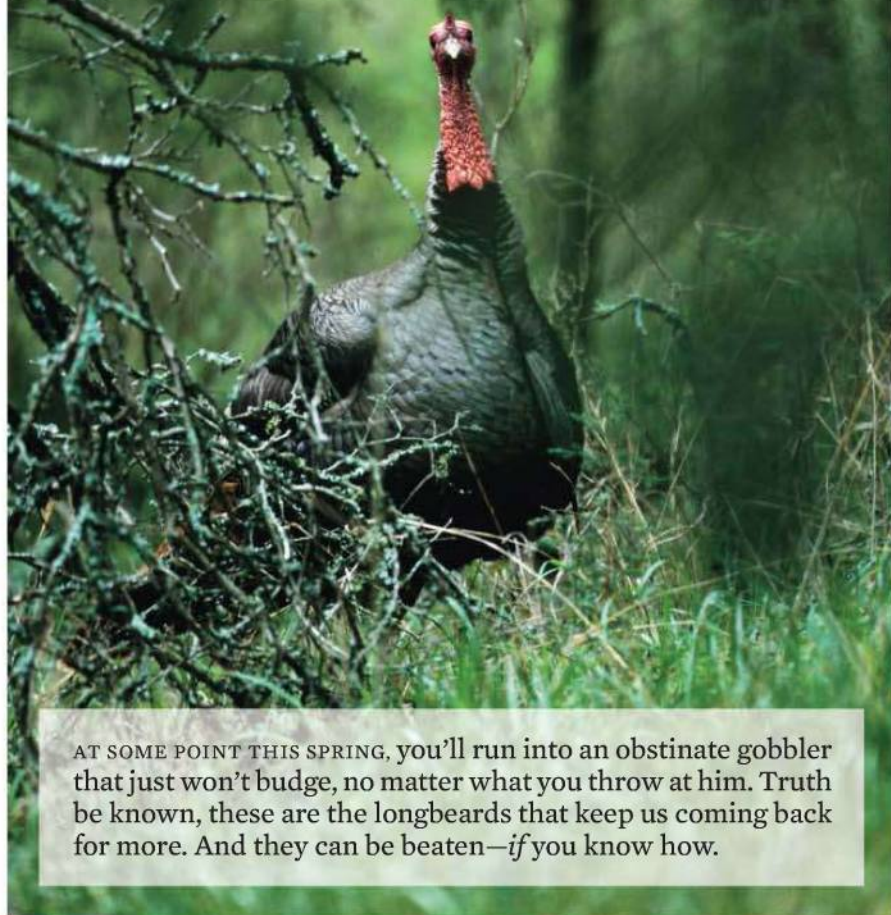
South Dakota issued more than 50 tags to hunt bison on Custer State Park in the Black Hills. The herd numbers about 1,500 head.

Utah issued 152 bison tags in 2009, mainly for hunts in the rugged Henry Mountains just north of Lake Powell, where about 450 buffalo roam.

TACTICS

Hung Up?

Here's what to do when that gobbler won't come another inch **BY STEVE HICKOFF**



AT SOME POINT THIS SPRING, you'll run into an obstinate gobbler that just won't budge, no matter what you throw at him. Truth be known, these are the longbeards that keep us coming back for more. And they can be beaten—if you know how.

Call In a Go-Away Bird

❖ **PROBLEM:** You've got a gobbler that's hot and constantly cuts your calls. However, when you move closer, he drifts away as if wanting you to show yourself and walk to his position.

❖ **SOLUTION:** One option is to yelp to get a response, then drop back and call from that retreated position. You can then silently slip up to your original spot undetected and close the deal.

❖ **FIELD TEST:** One Maine spring, I raised a gobbler in the woods, after spotting him near the edge of cover but still in the pasture. Every time I'd approach, set up and call, he'd answer

deeper in the woods. I'd move into that concealing cover, and he'd extend the distance. Finally I crossed the field corner and set up on the edge. He came, but only to the inside of far edge cover, hammering.

Right then I walked 50 steps through the woods behind me, yelping and cutting hard. He hammered back from that near edge cover. I slinked through the woods toward the bird, quickly but quietly. Situated right on the pasture edge, I waited silently. Long minutes passed. I softly yelped. He broke out of cover, strutting and mincing steps to my position, until I dropped him.

Show Up the Ladies' Man

❖ **PROBLEM:** The turkeys, hens and gobblers are stacked up like cordwood. You might hear a bird sound off at first and last light, but they stay silent the rest of the day.

❖ **SOLUTION:** Take a chapter out of the fall turkey hunter's book—break up the group of gregarious birds, then set up at the flush site and call them back.

What do you suppose that gobbler will do when his hens have winged off for parts unknown? Gobble, is what. And he'll do it alone.

❖ **FIELD TEST:** Jakes and hens unexpectedly flushed in the Missouri false dawn. I'd spooked them. A gobbler on the edge of the hilly roost barked at their noisy departure. Rather than panic, I slipped toward the lingering tom, set up quietly, and waited until just before fly-down time to call.

The longbeard hammered back, cutting off my calls, then sailed down, strutting and turning before walking down my shotgun barrel.

Challenge the Bully

❖ **PROBLEM:** Blame it on whatever you like, but there are some days when birds just don't seem interested. This is not so much a hang-up as it is a courtesy-gobble situation.

❖ **SOLUTION:** Aggressive fighting purrs can coax gobblers toward your position to watch other birds fight it out.

To imitate super fighting purrs, draw a line across your friction call with the striker tip pressed to the slate, glass or other surface. Vary the length of the notes: *purrrrr, purr, purr, purrrrrrrrr*. Toss in sharp clucks and agitated cutting to add even more agitation.

Stroke your push-pin's plunger the same way. Run your box-call paddle against the call's side lips to imitate this sound.

❖ **FIELD TEST:** In Texas last spring, I set up on a wad of turkeys, only to watch one group of hens fly down and another gang of longbeards and jakes separate to square off.

I made a brawling racket of fighting purrs over all their noise. The line of gobblers came running, as if they couldn't get there fast enough.

CATCH
OF THE MONTH



WHERE: Dean
River, British
Columbia
ANGLER: Brenda
Williams
WEIGHT: 25 LB.

Fishing



FISH MANAGEMENT

Frankenbass

A hybrid strain of largemouth is making a splash in the heart of Dixie

BY COLIN MOORE

IN FEBRUARY 2009, SPENCER ROSS had just cast a white Zoom Super Fluke soft jerkbait toward a point when he heard a bass striking behind him. Quickly setting down the rod he was holding and picking up another with a spinnerbait tied on, Ross turned and cast into the surface-feeding melee. After catching and releasing a 4-pounder, he picked up the Fluke rod again and started retrieving the lure. The line tightened. When Ross set the hook, a hole opened in the lake and the biggest bass the Alabama angler had ever seen

came leaping out of it with his lure in its mouth.

Several heart-pounding minutes later, Ross hauled the 13-pound 6-ounce largemouth over the side of his boat, photographed it on his cooler and released it. What made the catch more remarkable than the size of the fish was the fact that the bass was only about 5½ years old.

SUPERBASS IS BORN

Ross's largemouth had begun its life in Washington County's Bear Lake when Ray Beech, manager of the 120-acre private fishing club lake, decided to stock a few thousand fingerling F1 Tiger Bass, a new hybrid strain developed by American Sportfish, a Montgomery, Alabama, commercial hatchery. Neither he nor any of his customers have ever had reason to regret the decision.

The American Sportfish approach to the development of Tiger Bass followed a basic blueprint: Spawn an aggressive strain of northern bass with Florida bass, famous for their quick growth. But there was more.

Illustration: Chris Armstrong

Fishing

Scientists then removed all the fingerling bass that exhibited aggressive tendencies, isolated them in another tank until they reached reproductive stage, bred them, isolated all their offspring that exhibited alpha personalities in another tank, bred them, and so forth. It was that simple.

"We found that if you take a group of two-inch-long bass from many different parents and combine them in a big tank, some will immediately exhibit aggressive traits," says Barry Smith, co-owner of the Montgomery hatchery with Don Keller. "We developed a way to separate the go-getters from the ones that hold back. In time, we came up with Tiger Bass, which are more aggressive and gain mass relatively quickly."

Ross, a Chatham car dealer who's caught several Tiger Bass from Bear Lake that weighed more than 10 pounds each, can attest to the fish's growing ability as well as its "meanness."

"I wouldn't say they're any more aggressive about hitting a lure than our



Even as fingerlings, Tiger Bass exhibit aggressive tendencies.

Alabama bass, but they're just so dog-gone mean when they get hooked."

Beech is sold, too. He credits a combination of Tiger Bass, a perfect blend of bluegill and threadfin forage, and good fertilizing and liming for creating a lunker haven at Bear Lake. In fact, Beech has a standing reward of \$10,000 for anybody who breaks the current lake record, set by Ross.

"I think I'm going to have to pay up in 2011," he says.

Eye of the Tiger

American Sportfish's Tiger Bass is a hybrid strain of Florida and northern largemouths. Florida bass are known for rapid growth rates, while northern fish are noted for superior aggressiveness. The F1 is gaining wide acceptance by pond managers for several reasons.

Increased Catch Rates: Private pond bass have a well-deserved reputation for increased lure shyness as they age. Because F1s are a cross with northern-strain largemouths, catch rates remain high throughout the bass's life.

High Growth Rates: Largemouths are capable of growing a pound a year after the first year of their lives. F1 growth rates seem superior, with some fish growing to as much as 7 pounds in just 27 months.

Ease of Feeding: Largemouths typically snub fish pellets, whereas F1s, because of their aggressive nature, eagerly take this form of supplemental feed.

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TIPS & TRICKS

3 Ways to Unsnag a Fishing Lure



Bow and Arrow (rocks and boulders)

Pull the line tight until you have pressure against the snag and then let the line go, like shooting a bow and arrow, which throws slack into your line and can jar the lure free. It might take several tries before working.



Slow and Steady (grass and weeds)

This technique is most effective for soft snags. Point the tip of the fishing rod straight at the snag, tighten the drag down completely or palm the spool so that no line can come off the reel, and pull straight back toward you.

The harder you fish, the more you get snagged. Here are simple ways to get your lures back

BY GERRY BETHGE



Pole Poke (stumps and trees)

Use a long pole or an oar—a collapsible aluminum pole that can be extended to 12 feet or more is great, too. Maneuver the boat directly over the snag, follow the line down to the snag with the oar or pole and knock it free.

Patrick Welsh



Build lifelong memories

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GEAR

Ship Shape

Six new products to keep your boat, fishing gear and tackle organized

BY JOHN TARANTO



1. OHO Captain's Bag 2.0

This tricked-out gear hauler features a water-proof ripstop exterior, a molded bottom, a wide-mouth opening, 10 pockets (seven interior) and two removable side bags. **(\$220; oldharbor outfitters.com)**

2. Flambeau T5 Pro Multiloader

Capable of holding seven utility boxes, the T5P also has a ton of open space, which allows for flexibility in organizing gear. Spinnerbait storage and line spoolers are built in. **(\$60; flambeau outdoors.com)**

3. Cabela's XPG Waistpack

The new Deluxe Angler waistpack is an ideal gear bag option for on-the-go anglers. Features include a padded back and hip belt, a pliers/tool holster, two exterior pockets and two utility boxes. **(\$45; cabelas.com)**

4. Plano Liqua-Bait Locker

Designed specifically to contain both the liquids and odors of simulated live bait products, these leak-proof, airtight containers (available in two sizes) will keep your bait fresh. **(\$15-\$25; plano molding.com)**

5. BPS Extreme Binder Bag

The Side-By-Side Double Binder Bag folds up to the size of a small briefcase. One side holds 10 resealable pages; the other stores two 360-size utility boxes (not included). **(\$35; plano molding.com)**

6. Fishpond Storm Mountain

The ultimate driftboat companion, the Storm Mountain Gear Bag features a rain/splash guard, molded waterproof bottom, padded sidewalls, interior dividers and more. **(\$195; fishpondusa.com)**



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Ask the Experts

Q: Why am I always told not to touch the “whiskers” on a catfish?

—Ron Markel, Denver, CO



A: Feel free to touch catfish whiskers all you want, but you'd do well to avoid the spiny dorsal and pectoral barbs—especially on saltwater hardhead cats. The pain can be excruciating, and sometimes requires medical treatment. Always use pliers when dehooking hardheads.



Q: When I'm bowfishing, what are the minimum and maximum draws I should have on my bow?

—bowfishertothee, via outdoorlife.com

A: If the fish you're targeting are primarily under 20 pounds, and shots are at a relatively short range (5 to 15 yards), a draw weight of 45 pounds should be sufficient. Remember that bowfishing action for species such as carp and suckers can be fast and furious, so it's best to use a bow that's easy to draw and shoot all day.

—Gerry Bethge, Fishing Editor

OL ODYSSEYS

Great Getaways!

These fishing road trips offer great scenery, fun places to visit and reel-screaming action



1. Montana | Yellowstone Trout

From Slough Creek in the northeast corner of the park to the Lewis River in the southwest, hundreds of waters lie within a fly cast of the road. Check out the winding blacktop from Old Faithful to Madison Junction—perfect for a laid-back cruise.

Where to Fish: Slough Creek for cutthroats; Firehole River for rainbows.

Stay Tuned: Watch for our Yellowstone feature in the June/July issue.

Best Bar: Beartooth Café (406-838-2475)

Great Eats: The Old Faithful Inn (307-344-7311) for ambiance alone.



2. Michigan | Salmon/Trout

Just 13 miles north of Manistee lies the hidden jewel of Onekama, Michigan, where you can troll for salmon and trout or fling lures off the breakwaters.

Where to Fish: Charter a boat out of Portage Lake April to October. We've fished several times with Kevin Hughes (sandpipersportfishingcharters.com).

Best Bar: Shay's Chop House (shayschophouse.com) on Crescent Beach Road is a top spot.

Great Eats: Try the Glenwood (glenwoodrestaurant.com) for dinner.



3. Minnesota | Walleyes/Pike

Made up of three giant lakes—Rainy, Kabetogama and Namakan—Voyageurs National Park lies just west of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Where to Fish: Our choice is to check out Rainy Lake Houseboats (rainylakehouseboats.com). Gather up to 12 of your closest walleye-loving friends and live on one of nine cruisers for a week.

Great Eats: There are plenty of places to pull up the boat and cook lunch.

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GREAT LAKES TROLLING

Super System for Salmon

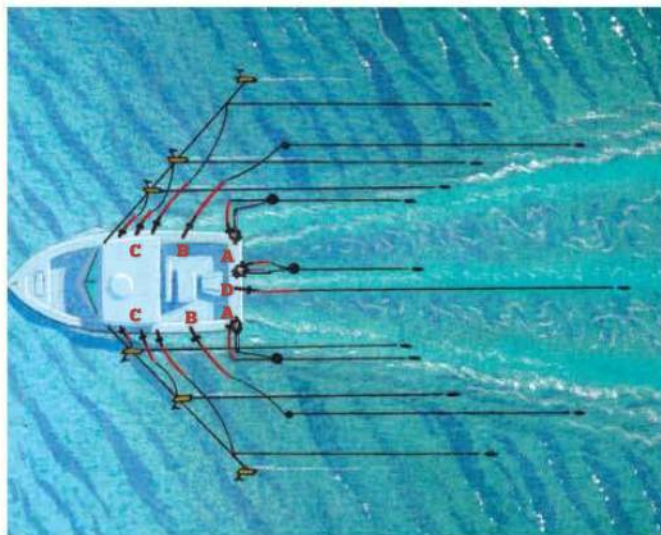
Precision is the only way to win the Big Lake trolling game **BY D'ARCY EGAN**

THE HIGH-POWERED KING SALMON of the Great Lakes can be caught in spring, summer and fall with downriggers, diving planers and side planer boards, although it is critical to change tactics and patterns throughout the season.

Veteran fishing guide Frank Kittrick of Y-Knot Charters (yknotcharters.com) targets big kings, as well as cohos, lak-ers and steelhead on western Lake Ontario. With one of the most vibrant populations of trout and salmon in the Great Lakes, Lake Ontario's west end can be an exciting fishery—if you understand how to locate fish and trigger strikes.

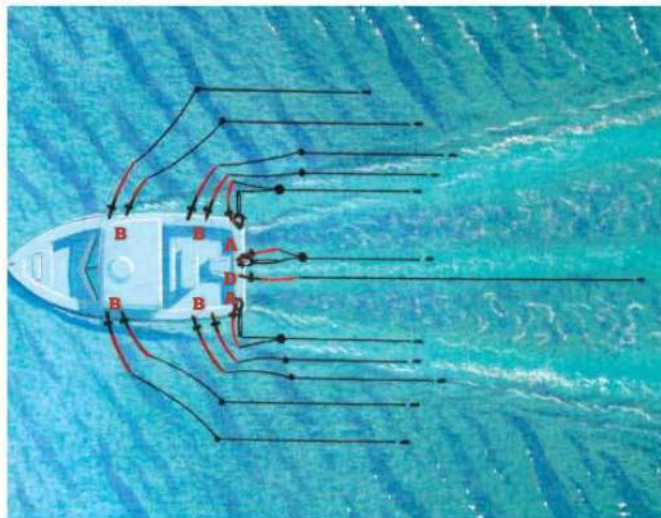


Typical Great Lakes' salmon trolling systems appear to be ultra-complex—because they are. But there's a method to the madness of the haphazard maze of rods, riggers and lines.



Trolling gear set-ups for spring (top) and fall (bottom):

(A) Downriggers (B) Diving planers
(C) Side planer boards (D) Lead-core long-line



SPRING TACTICS

The Target: With schools of salmon in 12 to 40 feet, the early spring season is a time for shallow-water techniques.

The Rod Count: Six planer board rods, 2 diver rods, 3 down-rigger rods, one lead-core long-line rod.

The Tactic: Planer boards spread out the school of lures, while downriggers and diving planers take lures down quickly to the suspended salmon and trout.

The Hardware: Minnow-style plugs such as the Reef Runner dominate lure selection. In shallow water, a Slide Diver and braided line works best. An angler can run 50 feet or more of line behind the diving planer so salmon aren't spooked by the boat. The downrigger lines can be lowered to tempt salmon close to the lake bottom, while weights can be added to the planer board lines to make fish run away from the noise of the boat, yet at the best depth. Surprisingly successful is a lead-core long-line rig run well behind the boat, with three to four colors of lead core getting the lure to the proper depth.

FALL TACTICS

The Target: In late summer and fall, salmon begin to stage around their spawning streams, and successful anglers target the drop-offs in 80 to 200 feet.

The Rod Count: Six to 8 diver rods, 3 downrigger rods, one lead-core long-line rod.

The Tactic: A zigzag trolling pattern can help to trigger strikes. Lots of flash helps to catch fish; Kittrick recommends flashers and dodgers in front of the flies and spoons. Lowering a probe on the center downrigger helps make sure the lures run 2 to 2.2 miles per hour—the slow speed is critical for flashers and dodgers to perform. Ignore the temperature gauge. Chinook, or king, salmon aggressively feed before heading up the rivers to spawn.

The Hardware: The big side planer boards are put away in fall in favor of downriggers and Dipsy Divers and wire line. Deploy as much as 200 to 250 feet of line to allow the Dipsy Divers to run lures deep enough.

Illustrations: John Rice; photo: StammPhoto.com

RARE TROPHY

Old Blue 'Eyes

The hunt is on for a walleye of a different color

BY JEFF HOLMLUND

AS NORTHERN WILDERNESS OUTFITTERS pilot Chris Olson prepared the turbo Otter for descent, I caught my first glimpse of northwestern Ontario's Richardson Lake, locally known as the mother lode of a fish so odd that few accomplished North Woods anglers have ever glimpsed one, let alone caught one. Since taking my first blue walleye more than 30 years ago, I have been afflicted with a strange urge that has driven me to such places—wading through muskeg bogs, braving mosquito-infested forests and spending days lost in the bush in a mad quest to find this unique fish.

Genetically distinct from the vanished blue pike of Lake Erie, blue walleyes are a morphed cousin of the common yellow walleye. The blue color, more prominent during the summer, forms within the mucous layer of their skin on the dorsal part of the body and the upper part of the tail. Unlike the coloring associated with genetic aberrations such as albinism or melanism, skin pigment on the blue walleye rubs off when abraded. It is not a pigment in the fish, but rather growing on the skin.

BLUES CLUES

Dr. Wayne Schafer of the University of Wisconsin has spent a great deal of time studying these rare fish near his cabin in northwestern Ontario.

"I've encountered a lot of blue walleyes while fishing the area," says Dr. Schafer. "When I began asking outfitters at sport shows if they had blue walleyes in their lakes—and whether I could go in and take a closer look at them—I found several, and have been tracking blue walleyes from the Lake Nipigon



area all the way up to the Cobham River in northeastern Manitoba."

Blue walleyes have been reported from the eastern Manitoba border across northern Ontario to Quebec and are generally found in isolated mesotrophic Canadian Shield lakes. More recently, they are showing up in lakes on the Canada/U.S. border and in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Gather local knowledge, as there's not a lot of information available on this fish. A local outfitter, bait shop or wildlife office can point you in the right direction.

FISH FINDING MISSION

I fish the Fort Frances/Red Lake corridor in northwestern Ontario, as it has literally thousands of underutilized lakes, with a high percentage of blue walleyes. World-renowned big walleye



The blue tinge on these unique walleyes is formed within its mucous layer and can actually rub off on your hands.

lakes such as Lake of the Woods, Rainy Lake and Lac Seul all hold small populations, but the highest concentrations are off the beaten path. Lakes such as northwestern Ontario's Richardson, Tupman, Wabakimi, Kenoji, Bow and Oliver are all proven producers.

During my trip to Richardson, we caught and released dozens of blue-colored walleyes for every third yellow walleye we caught. Think blue when deciding on color—fishing a minnow-tipped blue jighead along emerging weed lines and boulders accounted for most of our action. During frenzied mid-morning fishing, switching to Gulp Alive or a Slurpies Rock-R-Minnow saved having to constantly re-bait when boating more fish.

Richardson Lake lived up to its billing, serving us fantastic action, and it was with a "blue" heart that I watched the Otter slip in over the trees for our pick-up back to civilization. This trip may be over, but I know it won't be the last time I go in search of the blue walleye.

True Blues

ARE CANADA'S BLUE WALLEYES PART OF LAKE ERIE'S LEGACY?

In the early 1950s, "blue pike" swam the waters of Lake Erie in such large numbers that the annual commercial catch often exceeded 20 million pounds. By 1983, the blue pike was declared extinct. But is it?

Some suggest that the blue walleyes that exist in small lakes in Canada are the same fish that once swam in Lake Erie, and not a simple variation of the common yellow walleye. Fisheries biologists hoped that the answer lay with an angler named Jim Anthony, who had kept a Lake Erie blue pike in his freezer for more than 35 years. Unfortunately, DNA testing showed that Anthony's fish was the offspring of a female blue pike and a male walleye, and not a distinct species. The search for any remaining Lake Erie blue pike continues.



ROUND-UP

Chill Out!

Keep your edibles cool on the way into and out of camp **BY BRIAN LYNN**

Igloo Marine Elite Built for boats, Marine Elite boxes feature stainless-steel hinges and latches and vinyl lid straps. While the box lacks any tie-down points, the swing-up handles with rubber grips provide a sure in-hand feel. An anti-microbial liner keeps fish slime from settling into the cooler's pores. A molded ruler on the lid allows for quick slot limit checks. It's rated to hold ice for five to nine days, depending on the size. Available in 72-, 94-, 128- and 162-quart sizes. (\$80-\$340; westmarine.com)

Cabela's Ice Otter Loaded with polyurethane foam, the Cabela's Outfitters Series of coolers will keep ice for up to 10 days. Heavy-duty, lockable stainless-steel latches and a stainless-steel piano hinge, which runs nearly the entire length of the cooler, ensure ironclad security. Our favorite feature is the drain system, which is actually a faucet. The spigot is threaded to accept a hose. Available in 56-, 132-, 192- and 432-quart sizes. (\$250-\$600; cabelas.com)

Engel USA With 2 inches of insulation and an airtight seal, Engel's certified "bear-resistant" boxes will hold ice for 8 to 10 days. A full-length aluminum-rod hinge embedded in the insulation virtually guarantees that it won't break away from the chest. Non-skid rubber feet and tie-down points keep the chest from sliding around on a boat deck, while the corner locking holes accept padlocks. The 35-, 65- and 80-quart models are available in white and hunter green; 123-, 146- and 320-quart sizes come in white. (\$239-\$800; engel-usa.com)

Yeti Tundra Series Similar to Engel coolers, right down to the padlock ports, an integrated hinge system, a pitched floor with recessed drain plug and the bear-resistant certification, the Yeti Tundra differs in a few key areas. Larger securing slots accept ropes or ratchet straps. Unique rubber T-latches fit snugly into molded keeper slots. The chest is surrounded by 2 inches of insulation, and an extra inch of foam is added to the lid. The 35-, 45-, 65-, 85-, 105-, 120- and 155-quart sizes come in white or desert tan. The 250-quart is available in white. (\$240-\$750; yeticoolers.com)

Eddie Berman

SAVE-A-STREAM

Join Project Save-a-Stream!



Get a group of volunteers together and clean up your favorite local stream this summer

BY CAMILLE RANKIN

CARING FOR OUR NATION'S WATERWAYS is a great way to benefit your community and connect with your neighbors. Just identify a local stream that's in need of some TLC, organize a group of volunteers and put your plan into action. Outdoor Life's Project Save-a-Stream can help.

HOW IT WORKS: Project Save-a-Stream provides information, cleanup materials and nationwide visibility to groups and communities that are caring for local streams. Whether it's an arterial river, a small creek or even an unnamed backyard tributary, we offer support in helping you to clean up trash, assess the stream's health and join your neighbors in building a more healthy community, from the water up.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED: Tell us about your proposed Save-a-Stream project—maybe it's a plan to rehabilitate a reach of public beach or to monitor stream flow in a blue-ribbon fishing river or to hold a community-wide stream cleanup day. Submit a written description of what you plan to do, along with digital photographs or even video clips, to outdoorlife.com/saveastream. If your project is selected, we'll provide cleanup kits that contain stream stewardship information, gloves, trash bags and other useful items. And we might pick your stream project to be written up in a follow-up feature in *Outdoor Life*. Go to outdoorlife.com/saveastream for more information and tips. Deadline to enter is June 20, 2010.



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Shooting

Tip of the Month: When focusing a scope's reticle, use a gray sky for the backdrop and adjust until the crosshairs are sharp.



John Giustina/Getty Images

INNOVATION

Varmint Beware!

A new take on prairie dog rifles

BY JIM CARMICHEL

THE GROUP WAS WELL UNDER a half-inch—.404 inches, to be exact, as measured between the centers of the two widest shots in the five-shot group I'd fired at 100 yards. This is pretty good accuracy, even though we've learned on the Internet that even halfway-decent rifles of any and all makes are expected to shoot one-hole groups "all day long." But even if my group is deemed mediocre by such gilded standards, what might make it forgivable is the fact that the rifle's barrel had been removed between each shot.

So what's the big deal?, you're wondering. Who wants to screw a barrel in and out between shots? And for what logical reason would I contrive to pull such a stunt in the first place?

There actually was a good reason, but to better explain, let's go back a year or so, when I started planning my all-time ultimate varmint rifle.

The most difficult decision when buying a varmint rifle is deciding on the caliber. There are so many to choose from, every one offering uniquely beguiling features. So why not, I asked myself, build a varmint rifle that fires any cartridge of my choosing? Think how convenient it would be to have a rifle that fires, say, the sweet and petite .222 Remington



when you're in a tranquil mood, then scorches the atmosphere with a .220 Swift after you swap barrels. Sounds good, but there's a catch: If such a rifle is to be practical, each barrel will have hit close to the same point of aim, with little or no change in the scope setting.

A NEW TWIST

There's nothing new, of course, about rifles that can switch calibers. In my bookcase is a 1915 gun catalog listing a Winchester Model '94 that could be either a .30/30 or .25/35 by swapping barrels. The way it worked was pretty simple: With the magazine tube slipped out of the receiver, a quarter turn of the barrel released the works from the action.

With a bolt rifle, the idea of a switch-caliber gun goes sour when a scope is mounted on the receiver. That's because barrels tend to be independent-minded about which way they want to toss bullets. If you have, say, a scoped bolt action .30/06-.375 H&H combo sighted in for the '06 barrel, the

.375 barrel is more likely than not going to hit wide of your aim. Some switch-caliber rifles currently dodge the problem by mounting scopes on the barrel. This means you get to buy a scope for every barrel, a notion enthusiastically endorsed by optics makers.

But neither concept suited the rifle I wanted to build. Instead, I opted for a trick I'd picked up while hanging out with benchrest shooters. An unconventional habit of this peculiar tribe is the propensity for swapping barrels as readily, and with as little apparent provocation, as Liz Taylor swaps husbands. What makes these relatively quick barrel changes possible are simple little hand wrenches that fit inside the receiver. With the barrel firmly held in a portable vise that's clamped onto a shooting bench, picnic table or even a truck's trailer hitch, the action is twisted off the barrel with stock and scope still attached. Switching from one barrel to another this way takes only a few minutes. (See illustrations, opposite.)

What makes these speedy barrel changes all the more remarkable is that the newly fitted barrels almost invariably hit the target within a few inches of their predecessors. It was this observation, in fact, that gave me the notion that a switch-caliber varmint rifle might very well be possible. Why wouldn't barrels in other calibers similarly hold true to point of aim, provided they were pre-fitted to a specific rifle? Would accuracy be compromised

The Stolle action's left-side loading port, left-hand bolt and right-side eject make rapid, well-aimed fire possible.

by repeatedly removing and re-installing such barrels? Ah, there's the rub: If accuracy decayed, my project would be pointless, hence the point of my tests at the beginning of the article.

THE SUM OF THE PARTS

Lock, stock and barrel, the accuracy of a rifle is the sum of its parts. Put good parts together and you get good accuracy, provided they are assembled the way they should be. There are no shortcuts, especially when it comes to actions, the platform from which a rifle's accuracy flows. A couple of my most accurate varmint rifles were built on solid-bottomed Stolle actions, which are among the most successful and widely used actions in benchrest competition, and I planned to use one for my ultimate varmintier.

Another reason I chose the Stolle action is because it can be ordered with both the loading port and bolt handle on the left side of the receiver and the ejection port on the right. This sounds like an awkward configuration for a right-handed shooter—until you try it. It is actually faster for getting off well-aimed shots at the bench or prairie dog patch.

Why the need for speed? Isn't varmint shooting, by its very nature, a contemplative sport, a solitary launching of bullets across uncountable yards of green meadows or dusty prairies? To be honest, it has been my lamentable luck to have fallen in with a bunch of sharks who glory in their talent for finding the very prairie dog I'm aiming at and reducing it to vapors just as my finger



Peter Montanti/Mountain Photographics

The lines of this Fajen-style varmint stock are aesthetically pleasing, and the wide forend settles easily into sandbags.

is tickling the trigger. Why they do this is incomprehensible, and my repaying them in kind is, of course, unthinkable, so the only gentlemanly defense is to speedily pick off my allotted targets before the pirates encroach.

Stolle actions can be ordered with additional bolts with face sizes to fit various cartridge case rims. By ordering two bolts—one in the basic .222 Rem. face size and another in the standard '06 size—a single rifle is adaptable to well over a dozen popular calibers, plus scores of wildcats.

Another major factor would be the quality of the barrels and the precision with which they are threaded, fit and chambered. This is the challenge I offered to Wade Hull, the youngish owner of Shilen Barrels, a legendary name in the accuracy game. Though Shilen is known mainly as a maker of barrels for the worldwide trade, it will also fit-and-finish its barrels to a customer's rifle. So off to Shilen went my action and two bolts, with an order for fitted barrels in .22/250 Rem. and .204 Ruger.

Being an old-fashioned guy, I have a fondness for wood, and one of my favorite stock styles is the Fajen Varminter design of many years past. Among the

reasons I like it so well is the way the extra-high rollover comb comfortably aligns my eye with a high mounted scope. I'm also in favor of the way the wide forend snuggles into sandbags or other rests and the way the gracefully curved, hand-filling grip aids one-hand control of the rifle. Fred Wenig, a longtime associate of Fajen, now owns his own stock company and continues his version of the original Varminter stock in a variety of colorful laminated hardwoods, of which my choice was black and silver.

My first trip to the bench with the finished rifle was one of those make-or-break moments. The pretty little group fired with the .22/250 barrel removed between shots was encouraging, but the real test would come when I replaced it with the .204 Ruger. If it hit within 3 inches of that first group, I figured I'd have a winner, because a dozen or so clicks of the Leupold scope's quarter-minute adjustments would bring it on target, with no need to re-zero.

PROOF OF CONCEPT

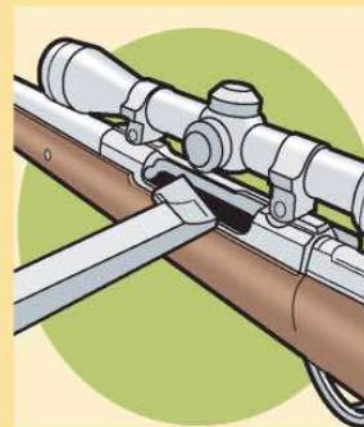
Even in my most optimistic imaginings, I could scarcely believe the little .20-caliber hole that appeared barely more than an inch above and a quarter-inch to the left of the group made by the first barrel! Not only could this scant difference of impact be corrected by a half-dozen clicks of the scope, but for practical use, the zero with both barrels was virtually the same, either barrel hitting a target the size of a prairie dog with no scope readjustment whatever.

Despite this first-time success, I still consider the project a work in progress. Will additional barrels in even more calibers deliver such nearly overlapping groups? Already the guys at Shilen are fitting a fast-twist .22/250 barrel for far-reaching shots with heavy bullets, and a .223 barrel will follow. The bottom line, however, is whether it will work as well for everyone. With precision barrel fitting, I'm pretty certain it will. Perhaps one of these days, the one-hole groups we're told about on the Internet won't be just boastful fantasy.

By ordering two bolts with different face sizes, Carmichel made his rifle compatible with dozens of varmint cartridges.

Switching Made Easy

The traditional action wrenches used to remove barrels encompass the receiver and require that the stock, scope and rings be removed. Not so with these handy wrenches, used by benchrest shooters.



Action Wrench

The head of the wrench snugs into the cutouts for the bolt lugs in the front of the receiver. Because of the precision with which the barrel is fitted to the action, there is no need for the barrel to be torqued down ultra-tight.



Barrel Vise

To keep the barrel secure while the action wrench is used, you can clamp it into a portable vise that readily attaches to a picnic table, shooting bench or even the trailer hitch of a truck or SUV, as pictured here. With one hand on the stock and the other applying force on the wrench, you can swap barrels in a matter of minutes to change calibers while prairie dog shooting.



A TREASURE REAPPEARS

Bell's Rigby

A rifle with 100 years of African hunting history **BY JOE COOGAN**

IT ISN'T EVERY DAY YOU encounter a rifle that is famous three times over. That this .275 Rigby originally belonged to the legendary ivory hunter "Karamojo" Bell is enough to secure its status as a historically significant firearm. But throw in the fact that it was subsequently purchased by one of the 20th century's preeminent outdoors writers and then owned by perhaps Africa's most famous Professional Hunter, and you have a unique firearm indeed.

Legendary ivory hunter "Karamojo" Bell favored light-caliber rifles for shooting elephants and had this .275 Rigby made for that purpose. The scope is not original. The rifle will be featured in an episode of *Benelli On Assignment* to be aired this fall (benelli.tv.com).

The rifle's story begins with the Scots adventurer Walter Dalrymple Maitland (W.D.M.) Bell, who first arrived in Africa shortly before the turn of the 20th century, when he was not yet 20 years old. Bell embraced the use of light-caliber rifles like the .256 Mannlicher and .275 Rigby—which is identical to the 7x57 Mauser, incidentally—for hunting Africa's largest game, firmly believing the size of the bullet made less difference to the kill than did the placement of the shot, as long as there was sufficient penetration.

Among his many rifles, Bell considered the .275 Rigby/Mauser a favorite, for it was with this rifle and caliber combination that he reputedly shot many of the more than 1,000 elephants he took during 30 years of hunting in Africa.

RUARK'S DISCOVERY

It was during Robert Ruark's first safari with Harry Selby, in 1951, that he heard tales of Bell's extraordinary big-game achievements. A few years later, Ruark happened to be in London and paid a visit to the famous Westley Richards gun shop. There he discovered two of Bell's firearms offered for sale by Bell's estate, following his death in 1953.

Ruark bought both rifles—a double Jeffery .450/400 N.E. and a .275 Rigby. He earmarked both rifles for his godson, Mark Selby, by having small silver



Harry Selby was reunited with Bell's Rigby when the gun's new owner, Mike Evans, took it to Africa in 2009.

nameplates engraved with "Mark R. Selby from Uncle Bob Ruark" inlaid on the buttstocks of each, and presented the famous rifles to Harry Selby for safe-keeping until Mark was old enough to handle them.

Bell owned several Rigby .275s, and this one was a takedown model, distinctive for the elongated hole cut through the buttstock, the purpose for which remains unclear. This particular feature is unknown on any other Rigby and is not mentioned in any of the Rigby catalogs. The rifle wore only iron sights, so Harry had the Treble brothers—noted Nairobi gunsmiths of the day—craft high, see-through scope mounts and fit a "Lyman Alaskan" 2.5X scope to the Rigby.

Ruark used the rifle on several safaris in its new configuration, including one safari in which he and Harry journeyed north to Bell's old stomping grounds in Karamojo. The gun's already rich

Writer Robert Ruark, author of *Horn of the Hunter*, purchased Bell's Rigby in the 1950s and had it engraved for his godson, Mark Selby.



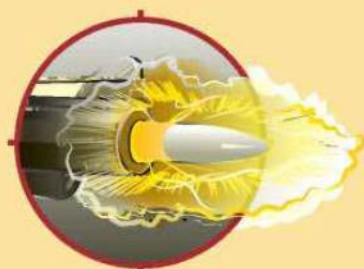
Andy Armstrong (gun). Courtesy Joe Coogan (Selby)

history was further enhanced by the hunting the Selby family did with it.

In the 1970s, the .275 Rigby changed hands again, and for nearly 30 years remained in a U.S. gun collector's possession without being fired. Last year, the little Rigby resurfaced, and was offered for sale. When big-game hunter Mike Evans heard of the offer, he immediately contacted the seller and sealed a deal to buy the rifle. Part of Evans' desire to own Bell's Rigby, besides protecting the incredible historical value

of the gun, was to take it to Africa and hunt with it—and to meet Harry and Mark Selby and show them the gun.

That happened in August 2009, when Evans traveled to Africa for a traditional-style safari conducted in Botswana's Okavango and Kalahari areas. After his hunt, Evans met with Harry Selby and was honored to have Harry again hold Bell's .275 Rigby—a rifle he knew so well and whose amazing history and accomplishments only continue to grow.



Gun Talk

Top gun-rights issues

BY JOHN HAUGHEY

✱ **Ruling in June** The Supreme Court is scheduled to hand down its ruling on *McDonald v. City of Chicago* in June. The decision could determine the extent to which local governments can limit the Bill of Rights, including the Second Amendment.

Pro-gun observers are cautiously optimistic that the court will affirm the Second Amendment as an incorporated right, meaning that local and state laws cannot supersede the right to bear arms.

During the oral arguments, there was one alarming note: In asking whether the Second Amendment applies to states, Justice Stephen Breyer "discussed the role of legislators making policy decisions about firearm regulations. He said that the choice for these legislators is between 'guns and life,'" said Larry Keane, NSSF senior VP and general counsel.

"I found this comment shocking," Keane added, "as it implies that

guns equal death, completely disregarding the fact that firearms are used three to five times more often in self-defense [thereby saving lives] than in the commission of a crime."

✱ **White House Silent** When the Supreme Court heard the historic constitutional gun rights case in *McDonald v. City of Chicago*, the White House offered no opinion on the matter, continuing a pattern that has become President Obama's M.O.

Given Obama's record as a legislator of denying gun rights, his silence on gun control since becoming president has been a surprising reversal for zealous gun-grabbers.

"We expected a very different picture at this stage," said Paul Helmke, president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, which issued a report card with failing grades for the administration in all seven of the group's major indicators.

✱ **Indiana's Senate Seat** Democratic Senator Evan Bayh of Indiana is leaving office. Gun Owners of America rated his voting record an "F"; the NRA gave it a "D-."

Three of four potential replacements for Bayh, including two Democratic congressmen, have solid pro-gun-rights voting records. The fourth, former Senator Dan Coats, a Republican, had a horrible voting record on Second Amendment issues when he was in office.

WHAT'S ON OUTDOOR CHANNEL in 2010?



SATURDAYS 7:30PM ET



SATURDAYS 10PM ET



SUNDAYS 7:30PM ET



www.outdoorchannel.com

Better Wood The hefty price tag buys you upgraded wood that has some nice figure and a high-gloss finish.



Familiar Action The operation and feel of the 1894 is the same as always, with the characteristic (and intentional) play in the rifle's action.

GUN TEST

Winchester 1894

The legendary lever gun returns **BY JOHN B. SNOW**

WHEN THE U.S. REPEATING ARMS CO. (USRAC) turned the power off in its New Haven, Connecticut, facility in 2006, a shockwave cascaded through the shooting world: For the first time in living memory, neither the Model '70 nor the Model '94 were being produced, and after 140 years of continuous operation, Winchester's New Haven plant was silent. As momentous as the news felt, the blow was cushioned to a degree by two bits of knowledge.

One, USRAC's long-standing financial difficulties and issues with quality control were no secret, so the announcement didn't come as a surprise. And more important, talks were already underway to chart a course to resurrect the two iconic firearms.

The Model '70 returned first, and today it is built in Columbia, South Carolina, in a plant that had been making sniper rifles for the military and law enforcement based on the Model '70 action. Tooling up for the civilian market was a relative snap, and after barely a year's hiatus, new—and much improved—Model '70s were on the way to gun store shelves.

The fate of the M94 was less certain. While there was no question that shooters would continue to flock to the Model '70 like swallows returning to the Old Mission in San Juan Capistrano, how much enthusiasm remained for the M94? Despite the millions of '94s that had been produced, and its enduring image as the quintessential North Woods deer rifle, the final '94s to roll off the New Haven assembly line were hardly the stuff of legend. Would it be possible for a new '94 to regain some of its hereditary mystique?

EXCLUSIVE NUMBERS

Rather than bet the company's whole stack of poker chips that the '94 would recapture its mass appeal, Winchester

Eddie Berman

Special Features



◀Laser Engraving

Both sides of the High Grade 1894's receiver are extensively decorated with laser-engraved scroll patterns.

Signed Work▶

Founder Oliver Winchester's signature appears in gold on the top of the bolt. The 1894 is available initially in .30-30 Win., but other calibers are planned.





In Tribute Because 2010 is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Oliver Winchester, this year's '94s are engraved with his image on the receiver and his signature on the bolt, inlaid in gold lettering.

Overall Rating:



Report Card

PERFORMANCE: B+

DESIGN: B+

PRICE/VALUE: B

Verdict: The "new" 1894 won't appease all the traditionalists, but it is good to see the icon back in production and being made with care.

placed a smaller wager and is producing the new '94s in limited quantities.

The rifle returns to us in two versions—the High Grade, which I evaluated, and an even fancier Custom Grade that has better wood and more ornate engraving. Both versions commemorate the 200th anniversary of Oliver Winchester's birth in 1810 and are adorned with his signature inlaid in gold on the top of the bolt and with his portrait on the right-hand side of the receiver. His eyes are turned down-range, and judging by the look on his face, he doesn't seem to think much of the shooter's marksmanship.

The laser-engraved pattern includes some scroll ornamentation and a ribbon that serves as a banner, with "1810–2010 TWO HUNDRED YEARS OLIVER F. WINCHESTER" emblazoned on it. On the receiver's other side is an ornate oval with the letters WRA, for Winchester Repeating Arms.

TRADITIONAL LOOKS

The rifle has retained some traditional touches of the '94s of yore, but "traditional" is a tricky word to use when describing the 1894 because of the astounding number of modifications and tweaks the rifle has had over the years, some of which added to its mystique while others made the Winchester faithful howl.

The crescent-shaped metal buttplate is one of those nostalgic touches, and

like the rest of the rifle's metalwork, shows evidence of careful polishing and even bluing, though the stock would benefit from a touch more drop in its comb to help the butt find the pocket of the shoulder more naturally.

The half octagonal, half round barrel also adds to the rifle's good looks, as does the wraparound checkering on the forend and on either side of the grip.

The receiver is not tapped and drilled for telescopic sights. You aim this rifle the old-fashioned way, by nestling the gold bead at the muzzle into the notch at the base of the semi-buckhorn rear sight.

The action has a feel and function that will be instantly familiar to anyone who has shouldered a '94, and at the range it cycled smoothly and was able to keep its bullets on target with ease. Its trigger broke cleanly at a hair above 4 pounds. Though not meant to carry a scope, the action retains the "angle eject" of the later '94s.

Happily, the rifle still has the tang-mounted safety that Winchester introduced late in the M94's life, after the chorus of despair from the shooting public caused the company to reject the despised cross-bolt safety that appeared like a wart on the '94 in 1992.

For now, the 1894 is offered only in .30-30, but Winchester is certain to add other calibers down the line.

The rifle is manufactured in Miroku, Japan, by the same folks who for many

years have been producing other vintage John Browning designs for Winchester, such as the 1885, 1886, 1892 (a kissing cousin of the '94) and "Big Medicine" 1895.

As much as I like this rifle, and as glad as I am to see it being produced by capable craftsmen, what I'm really eager to see are the future versions of the 1894. Company insiders have told me that a plainer Grade I model is in the works. I can picture that rifle in my mind's eye, balanced in one hand as I walk through the November woods on my family's farm in northern Michigan in search of a good stump overlooking a deer trail. It's a reunion sure to gladden any hunter's heart.

By the Numbers

Name	Winchester 1894
Caliber	.30-30 Win.
Capacity	8 + 1
Weight	7 lb. 8 oz.
Finish	Blue
Stock	Walnut
Barrel Length	24 in.
Rate of Twist	1 in 10 in.
Overall Length	42 in.
Trigger Pull	4 lb. 1 oz.
Price	\$1,469
Contact	winchester guns.com

Clay Target Etiquette

How to be a civilized shotgunner **BY CHRIS CHRISTIAN**

TRAP, SKEET AND SPORTING CLAYS are the most popular clay target games. And while the games differ, there are three rules that are common to all. The first, and most important, is to have a visibly unloaded gun. It should be evident to everyone on the squad that a shooter's gun is unloaded until that person is on his or her assigned station and ready to call for a bird. Pumps and semiautos need to have the bolt locked open, while O/Us and side-by-sides must have their actions broken.

These basic rules apply to all three games, but each has its own procedural etiquette. Here's how to avoid being the "skunk at the picnic."



Trap

This is a fast-paced game, and shooters want to fall into a **quick squad rhythm**. A shooter who is sluggish and constantly questioning scoring calls will not be popular with his fellow squad mates.

When you step onto your station, **watch the shooter two positions before you**. It is proper etiquette to load your gun when he calls for his bird. Mount your gun when the shooter just before you calls for his bird, and be ready to call for your target after he fires.

When moving between stations after your five rounds are fired, do not stop to pick up shells unless the other shooters are doing so. **Keep the squad moving**.

Also, it is common courtesy to **keep still while you are not shooting** and to keep your voice down.



Skeet

A round of skeet requires 25 shells, but **carry more than 25 shells with you**. If you break a doubles presentation with a single round, you'll need to shoot it over, and few things will irk squad mates like a shooter running out of shells and having to go get more.

Don't crowd the shooter on his turn at the station. The only person who should be within 10 feet of him is the puller.

When it's your turn to shoot, it is generally accepted that the puller will release the target at the first sound from you. **If you're not ready to shoot, don't talk!**

When shooting a single presentation, load only one shell. Loading two can be disconcerting to the other shooters and creates the possibility of an accidental discharge. **Load two shells only on doubles**.



Sporting Clays

The first shooter at each new station has the right to call for the targets—a "see"—without shooting at them. **If that shooter is forgetful, remind him to ask for a see**, because it lets the entire squad see the targets. There's nothing wrong with getting right behind the shooter for the "see," but after that first look, don't crowd the shooter in the cage. If a second look is needed, do it well back so as not to interfere with another shooter's shots.

If you need to adjust your pattern, **change chokes before you enter the cage**. Have enough shells with you to account for birds broken by pieces of a hit target on doubles that you'll have to reshoot. You paid your money to shoot, but so did everyone else. Keep things moving and you'll be a valued squad mate.

Dave Spartas/DCS Photo (top), Ralph Lermayer/Windigoimages.com (trap), Steve Lindridge/Alamy (skeet), Lal Threlkeld (clays)

Very high triglycerides
is a medical term for
something serious:

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from omega-3 fish oil: LOVAZA

If you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes, you may also have very high triglycerides, which is a serious medical condition. LOVAZA, along with diet, has been clinically proven to effectively lower very high triglycerides*, but it hasn't been shown to prevent heart attacks or strokes. LOVAZA is the only FDA-approved medication made from omega-3 fish oil. It's purified. It's concentrated. And you can't get it at a health food store. Ask your doctor about LOVAZA—the prescription that starts in the sea.

*Individual results may vary.

Important Safety Information for LOVAZA

LOVAZA, along with diet, helps to lower very high triglycerides (≥ 500 mg/dL) in adult patients. Tell your doctor if you are allergic to fish or shellfish as LOVAZA may not be right for you. Talk to your doctor about any medical conditions you have and any medications you are taking, especially those that may increase your risk of bleeding. In some patients, LDL-cholesterol levels may increase. Your healthcare provider should do blood tests before and during treatment with LOVAZA to check your cholesterol and triglyceride levels. If you have liver disease, you may require additional monitoring. Possible side effects include burping, infection, flu-like symptoms, upset stomach and change in sense of taste.

How supplied: 1-gram capsule

Please see important Patient Information on the next page.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Ask your doctor if LOVAZA is right for you
Visit **LOVAZA.com** or call **1-877-LOVAZA1**


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visit GSKforYou.com or call 1-866-GSK-FOU (1-866-475-3678)



Capsule shown not actual size

PATIENT INFORMATION

LOVAZA® (iō-vā-zā)
(omega-3-acid ethyl
esters) Capsules

LOVAZA
omega-3-acid ethyl esters

Read the Patient Information that comes with LOVAZA before you start taking it, and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This leaflet does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your condition or treatment.

What is LOVAZA?

LOVAZA is a prescription medicine, called a lipid-regulating medicine, for adults. LOVAZA is made of omega-3 fatty acids from oils of fish, such as salmon and mackerel. Omega-3 fatty acids are substances that your body needs but cannot produce itself.

LOVAZA is used along with a low-fat and low-cholesterol diet to lower very high triglycerides (fats) in your blood. Before taking LOVAZA, talk to your healthcare provider about how you can lower high blood fats by:

- losing weight, if you are overweight
- increasing physical exercise

Treatment with LOVAZA has not been shown to prevent heart attacks or strokes.

LOVAZA has not been studied in children under the age of 18 years.

What should I tell my doctor before taking LOVAZA?

Tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions and all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicine, vitamins, and herbal supplements. LOVAZA and certain other medicines can interact causing serious side effects.

Especially tell your doctor if you take medicines:

- To reduce clotting—known as anticoagulants or blood thinners. These include aspirin, warfarin, coumarin and clopidogrel (PLAVIX®).

Tell your doctor if you are allergic to fish and/or shellfish. LOVAZA may not be right for you.

Who should NOT take LOVAZA?

Do not take LOVAZA if you:

- are allergic to LOVAZA or any of its ingredients.

What are the possible side effects of LOVAZA?

The most common side effects with LOVAZA are burping, infection, flu symptoms, upset stomach and change in sense of taste.

LOVAZA may affect certain blood tests.

It may change:

- One of the tests to check liver function (ALT)
- One of the tests to measure cholesterol levels (LDL-C)

Talk to your doctor if you have side effects that bother you or that will not go away.

These are not all the side effects with LOVAZA.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist for a complete list.

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December 2009

Shooting

Ask the Experts

Q: What is the proper amount of torque that should be applied to the screws of scope mounts and rings? —*Logan Sorensen, Moscow, ID*

A: There is no one-size-fits-all value for the amount of inch-pounds to apply to the screws in your scope rings and mounts. The reason is that the material (steel vs. aluminum), screw diameter, thread pitch and, the biggest X-factor of all, coefficient of friction all come into play when determining the amount of torque a given fastener can take. That said, there are some general rules that have served me well over the years when assembling rifles.

Scope rings don't need much torque and can be pretty fragile, so I generally use about 12–15 inch-pounds of torque to hold them together. If using rings with two (or more) screws to a side, be sure to snug them down in gradual increments, the way you would tighten the lug nuts on a car tire. Scope mounts with shallow engagement get about the same amount of torque, though if the fasteners are wider or extend more deeply into the action, I'll use up to 20 inch-pounds of torque.

The guard screws that hold the

action and stock together can take much more torque. With a wood stock, I generally use 45 inch-pounds of torque; synthetic stocks or stocks with pillar bedding get up to 65 inch-pounds of torque. (Be sure to tighten the front screw first with the barrel pointed skyward, so the recoil lug seats properly.)

When tightening fasteners, use a smooth motion and try to keep the wrench head aligned with the screw. Torque wrenches with dial indicators like the TSQ-75 from Seekonk Mfg. pictured here are very accurate and will last forever with the proper care. (\$154; seekonk.com)

—*John B. Snow, Shooting Editor*



Win free gear! For submitting the question of the month, Logan Sorensen will receive Hoppe's BoreSnake Viper. For your chance to win free gear, submit your question to outdoorlife.com/ask

HISTORY

How RCBS Got Its Name

When Fred Huntington started his business out of his home at the end of World War II, his one product didn't even have a name—but what a clever product it was. His bullet swaging press could take the spent brass from a .22 rimfire and stretch it to form the jacket of a bullet. His press and dies could then shape a lead core to fit in that jacket and compress them together to form a dandy little varmint bullet.

In honor of the rock chucks these bullets were often shot at, the product became the Rock Chuck Bullet Swage and the company he founded was officially named RCBS in 1949.



Huntington's swaging press launched the company that became known as RCBS.

Eddie Berman (torque wrench), RCBS/Kent Sakamoto (swaging press)

Tip of the Month

Follow this checklist before hitting the bow range:

1. Rewax the string.
2. Lubricate the axles, bushings and bearings.
3. Refletch worn vanes.
4. Check the string and cables for wear.

Tested & Reviewed

Gear

FIELD-TESTED

Bow Shootout 2010

Quality across the board defines this year's crop of compound bows

BY TODD A. KUHN

WHEN WE LOOK BACK AT 2010 in the annals of archery history, the year ought to have an asterisk by it with a footnote. In my opinion, 2010 will forever be known as the year compound bow design took a quantum leap forward.

It's incredible how much the category has improved in a year. The batch of newbies that we tested in February was loaded with innovation and technological advancements...a major step forward from the line-up we saw in 2009 (and those bows were pretty good).

In recent years, top speeds have hit a plateau, as mechanical efficiencies have peaked. However, this year the average speed of the test bows was an astounding 324 fps, up from 318 fps last year. While speed was up, the average bow weight was down, to 4.16 pounds from 4.23 in 2009.

After pounding the indoor range with hundreds of arrows, collecting literally tens of thousands of data points via state-of-the-art technology and thoroughly poking and prodding each bow, here's what we found.

All photos: Justin Appenzeller

WIN
These Bows!
For details, go to
[outdoorlife.com/
bowgiveaway](http://outdoorlife.com/bowgiveaway)

**2010
OUTDOORLIFE
EDITOR'S
CHOICE**



Mathews Z7

Overall Rating: ★★★★★½

Weight: 4.4 lb.; **Speed:** 325 fps

Hits: The Reverse Assist cable guard reduces friction during the draw cycle (see sidebar, page 54), and the limb pockets are the cleanest in the industry. Now in their second year, the SE4 Composite Limbs are lightweight and proven to be very durable. A plethora of accessories includes a Dead End String Stop, Harmonic Stabilizer, Monkey Tail silencers, Slim Fit grip and string suppressors.

Misses: The most common complaint about otherwise outstanding bows is the grip, and that's the case with the big and bulky "Slim Fit" grip.

Bottom Line: The Z7 deftly combines top-fuel ferocity with buttery smoothness. (\$899; mathewsinc.com)

**2010
OUTDOORLIFE
GREAT
BUY**



PSE X-Force Axe 6

Overall Rating: ★★★★★½

Weight: 4.05 lb.; **Speed:** 343 fps

Hits: The Axe 6 shares DNA with its predecessors built on the X-Force chassis. The highly adjustable Axe Inner Cam offers 6 inches of draw-length adjustment without a module change. Soft, almost malleable side grip plates are an ergonomic treat. Add the best balance of the test group, and you have as fine a precision shooting instrument as you'll find.

Misses: The late-1980s-era cable guard and slide are in desperate need of a makeover.

Bottom Line: The Axe 6 delivers more speed, smoothness and shootability than bows that cost \$200 more. (\$749; pse-archery.com)

HOW WE TEST

Nobody Tests Like We Do

An inside look at what makes the *Outdoor Life* Bow Test the toughest, most scientific and most exhaustive test in the archery industry

Around the time of the annual Archery Trade Association show, when the year's new archery products are unveiled, we extend an invitation to every hunting compound bow manufacturer to submit a bow for the test that is both new and innovative. Once the bows are received, they are weighed on a certified scale and the weights are recorded. BowTech Octane Hostage Pro arrow rests are installed, as are nock loops. After the initial inspection and preparation, the bows are ready to be evaluated.

Each bow is tested at 30-inch draw lengths and 70-pound draw weights, to meet International Bowhunting Organization standards. To eliminate any human interaction during our objective testing (for speed, vibration and noise), bows are shot from a Spot-Hogg Hooter Shooter mechanical shooting fixture with a Carter Insatiable release. The release is triggered using a shutter-style cable to eliminate human error.

Vernier 25-g accelerometers mounted on a plate are installed via the riser sight mounting holes for bow-to-bow consistency. Once a bow is shot, the vibration data—measured along both vertical and horizontal axes—is downloaded to a vibration analysis computer program. Vibration data is then crunched and an average vibration “score” is displayed in meters per second squared (m/s^2). The lower that number, the less total vibration caused by the bow.

Each bow is scored from 60 to 100 in 10 categories, four

Testers score each bow in six subjective categories. Those scores are combined with empirical data to derive the overall scores.



Accelerometers attached to the bows measure vibration. When a bow is shot, the data is displayed in a computer program.

based on empirical data and six based on the opinions of the expert testers.

Objective criteria include: “Mass Weight,” measured with a calibrated scale; “Speed,” measured using a Pro Chrono chronograph and a 350-grain arrow; “Peak Noise,” measured using a calibrated Vernier Sound Level Meter; and “Vibration,” measured by Vernier 25-g accelerometers.

Subjective criteria include: “Fit-and-Finish” (overall quality of construction); “Ergonomics” (overall balance and grip); “Solidness of Back Wall/Let-Off” (comfort at full-draw and back wall “crispness”); “Draw Cycle” (relative ease and smoothness of drawing the bow); “Overall Shootability” (perceived performance of the bow during draw and shot); and “Price/Value” (how much bang you get for your buck).

In addition to the **Editor's Choice** and **Great Buy** awards, which are given to the bows with the highest Overall and Price/Value scores, respectively, we are introducing a third award with the 2010 Bow Test. The **Innovator Award**, bestowed upon the Hoyt Carbon Matrix in this test, will be given to products in future gear tests featuring innovations considered by test teams to be revolutionary within their category—real game-changers. You won't see an Innovator Award in every gear test going forward, but when you do, you'll know that the product that earned it has raised the bar within its industry and deserves special recognition.





Mission Maniac

Overall Rating: ★★★★★

Weight: 4.15 lb.; **Speed:** 292 fps

Hits: The Maniac is outfitted with parallel limbs, a fully machined riser, string silencers, string suppressors and a Zebra Hybrid string. It's compact at 31 inches axle-to-axle, and has a wide 7¼-inch brace height.

It's a versatile bow, well suited for a range of archers, from beginner to intermediate. The draw length is adjustable from 22 to 30 inches, draw weights range from 20 to 70 pounds, and the let-off is adjustable up to 77 percent. The Maniac was the quietest bow in the field, and its draw cycle is smooth and predictable, ideal characteristics for a beginner's bow.

Misses: Heavy for smaller archers.

Bottom Line: A good choice for growing hunters seeking high-end features in an econo-compound. (\$449; missionarchery.com)



Parker Inferno

Overall Rating: ★★★★★

Weight: 3.75 lb.; **Speed:** 320 fps

Hits: An all-CNC-machined riser anchors the feathery 3.75-pound design (lightest in the test). At a short 30⅜ inches, and given its weight, the Parker will be ideal for bowhunters who routinely spot-and-stalk over unruly terrain. The bow balanced well and is an easy hold, thanks to its seeming weightlessness.

The crispness of the back wall, smoothness of the draw cycle and overall speed are surprising for a bow at this price. A tunable string damper adds to the appeal, as does the high-end roller cable guard and premium Stone Mountain string.

Misses: At 87.7 dBA, it's rather loud.

Bottom Line: Worth a hard look by those shopping for a high-performance entry-level bow. (\$499; parkerbows.com)

The Test Team



Dr. Todd Kuhn: OL's Bowhunting Editor holds a doctorate in environmental engineering. He's been bowhunting for more than 40 years.



Chad "Moose" Whitmoyer:

Whitmoyer is the lead "Techxpert" at Lancaster Archery Supply, and is arguably the nation's top bow technician.



Larry Kaye: An avid archer with more than 30 years of bowhunting and competitive archery to his credit.



Gus Edwards: Owns and operates Autumn Sky Outfitters in Street, Maryland. He is considered the top bow technician on the East Coast.



Rob Kaufhold: The founder and president of Lancaster Archery Supply. Kaufhold has competed internationally on the U.S. and World teams and is a former All-American archer at James Madison University.

Where We Tested

Lancaster Archery Supply is an industry-leading archery distributor and pro shop located in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. LAS, opened in 1983, stocks literally hundreds of thousands of products. With more than 35,000 square feet, it's the world's largest archery retailer.

LAS offers a technical hotline (800-829-7408) and e-mail support (custserv@lancasterarchery.com), through which customers can communicate with one of LAS's "Techxperts" about any archery-equipment-related topic.

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Learn More, Sleep Better

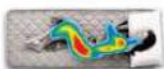
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BowTech Destroyer 350

Overall Rating: ★★★★★½

Weight: 4.2 lb.; **Speed:** 342 fps

Hits: New limbs are at the heart of BowTech's newest flagship. The high-modulus limbs have carbon cores, advertised as lighter than traditional limbs and with unique energy-storing capabilities. Aluminum inserts are said to stiffen the limb tips, and limit cam lean (see sidebar, page 54).

The bow tapes 32⅞ inches axle-to-axle, but shoots like a much longer bow. Its balance is just right, and the 6-inch brace height is manageable. This bow is scary fast, with a draw cycle that, while stiff, should please pure speed freaks.

Misses: The limbs have sharp edges, and the injection-molded handle might get slick in cold weather.

Bottom Line: The Destroyer is a turbo-charged, shock-free shooter. (\$949; bowtecharchery.com)



Diamond IceMan FLX

Overall Rating: ★★★★★½

Weight: 4.05 lb.; **Speed:** 314 fps

Hits: This freshly massaged version of last year's Editor's Choice features the unique FLX-Guard cable guard, which helps manage torque (see sidebar, page 54). As the bow is drawn, the composite cable guard flexes inward to minimize the amount of torque transferred to the riser and ultimately to the arrow.

The draw cycle is very smooth, in part because of the solo-cam design. The 7-inch brace height delivers tack-driving accuracy, while the 31½-inch axle-to-axle length is compact and maneuverable.

Misses: At 314 fps, it's somewhat lethargic; we'd like to see another 10 fps out of a bow with this price tag.

Bottom Line: The IceMan FLX was a pure shooter right out of the box. (\$849; diamondarchery.com)



Elite Judge

Overall Rating: ★★★★★

Weight: 4.35 lb.; **Speed:** 328 fps

Hits: Attention to detail is exhibited in every square inch of the Judge, and components fit with exacting tolerance. The two-piece side-plate grip is great, and the bow nestles precisely in hand.

The back wall was by far the crispest any of our testers have ever felt. At 34⅞ inches, the Judge is a relatively long bow. An abbreviated 6⅞-inch brace height is to be expected, given the Judge's speed.

A modular two-track cam system is standard equipment. It's straightforward and designed to optimize arrow speeds at any draw length.

Misses: The draw cycle is quite stout.

Bottom Line: An exceptional bow from a small manufacturer whom we should be hearing much more from in the future. (\$869; elitearchery.com)



G5 Quest Primal

Overall Rating: ★★

Weight: 4.1 lb.; **Speed:** 322 fps

Hits: At 32 inches axle-to-axle, this is a tightly wrapped, no-nonsense performer with a module-based twin-cam system under the hood.

The stark simplicity of the I-Glide cable guard will impress. Two glazed ceramic inserts replace the well-traveled cable wheels and plastic slides, in an effort to increase arrow speed and minimize cable wear.

Two blue speed studs (30 grains apiece) are installed on the string for micro-tuning the peep sight. A giant 7½-inch brace height elevates accuracy; the bow handles like it's on rails.

Misses: A short valley abruptly transfers into the back wall.

Bottom Line: This bow performs like a 1960s muscle car, yet handles like a European sports car. (\$729; g5outdoors.com)



Hoyt Carbon Matrix

Overall Rating: ★★

Weight: 3.9 lb.; **Speed:** 318 fps

Hits: Many attempts have been made to build a carbon riser, but all have failed on a large commercial scale. Enter the O-Tech from Hoyt (see sidebar, page 54). Unlike molded carbon risers of the past, the O-Tech riser comprises three hollow carbon tubes that are "interwoven" into a riser.

Despite a 35-inch axle-to-axle length, the Carbon Matrix weighs a half-pound less than one 30-inch competitor. The Matrix is equipped with relatively short parallel limbs and a simplified limb pocket system, which keeps the limbs aligned and the power on tap.

Misses: Aside from the price tag? The cable guard/slide somehow got forgotten in the techno-upgrade.

Bottom Line: A "must have" for discerning hunters. (\$1,599; hoytusa.com)



McPherson Monster 7.0

Overall Rating: ★★½

Weight: 4.65 lb.; **Speed:** 336 fps

Hits: The 33½-inch-long Monster has a liberal 7-inch brace height coupled with an 80 percent let-off. Power is applied by the Advanced Vectoring System, billed as the most efficient dual-cam system in the world. We found the Monster a pleasure to shoot, and its cavernous brace height is very forgiving of user error.

The Grid Lock riser design has eye appeal while adding rigidity with its cross-bracing effect. The bow is available in 25- to 30-inch draw lengths (including half-sizes) and 40- to 80-pound draw weights.

Misses: This Monster snarls a bit, with 74.22 m/s² of vibration.

Bottom Line: Combines blazing speed and precise shootability into a highly refined and finely crafted machine. (\$899; mathewsinc.com)

Cutting-Edge Innovations

Four advancements in compound bow construction that will change the way new bows are made



✱ **Hoyt O-Tech Carbon Riser:** While manufacturers have tried to construct a dependable carbon riser for years, none have succeeded—until now.

Representing a significant advance in engineering, strategically fashioned hollow carbon tubes yield new standards in design. At 35 inches axle-to-axle, this riser delivers all the stability of a longer bow, but with the weight of one much shorter.



✱ **FLX-Guard:** Standard equipment on both the Iceman and Destroyer, this cable containment system addresses the tuning effects of extreme cable tension and inflexible cable guards.

As the bow is drawn, the FLX-Guard flexes inward, absorbing cable-guard torque that would otherwise be transferred to the riser, significantly reducing lateral nock travel during the shot.



✱ **BowTech Hard Core Limbs:** Hard Core Limbs store energy not only near the limbs' surfaces, but also inside the limbs, thereby reducing stress and producing exceptional durability. The carbon core is also significantly lighter than other limb materials available today.



✱ **Mathews Reverse Assist Cable Guard:** Whereas traditional roller/cable guards are threaded under the top pulley and create friction when the bow is drawn, the Reverse Assist cable guard is threaded over the pulley, reducing friction and making the bow easier to draw.

Test Results at a Glance

		OVERALL	PERFORMANCE	DESIGN	PRICE/ VALUE	WEIGHT (LB)	SPEED (FPS)	CONTACT
Mathews Z7 (\$899)		★★★★ ½	B+	B	A	4.4	325	mathewsinc.com
PSE X-Force Axe 6 (\$749)		★★★★ ½	A+	C+	A	4.05	343	pse-archery.com
Diamond IceMan FLX (\$849)		★★★★ ½	B	A	B	4.05	314	diamondarchery.com
BowTech Destroyer 350 (\$949)		★★★★ ½	A+	A	B	4.2	342	bowtecharchery.com
McPherson Monster 7.0 (\$899)		★★★★ ½	A	C+	B+	4.65	336	mathewsinc.com
Hoyt Carbon Matrix (\$1,599)		★★★★	B+	B+	C	3.9	318	hoytusa.com
G5 Quest Primal (\$729)		★★★★	B	B	A	4.1	322	g5outdoors.com
Mission Maniac (\$449)		★★★★	C-	B	B	4.15	292	missionarchery.com
Elite Judge (\$869)		★★★★	B+	C+	B	4.35	328	elitearchery.com
Parker Inferno (\$499)		★★★ ½	B	B	B	3.75	320	parkerbows.com

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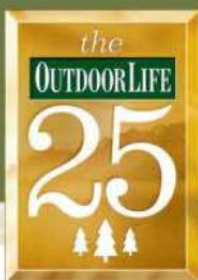
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OUTDOOR LIFE 25

NOMINATE SOMEONE YOU KNOW!

We're looking for reader-generated nominees for our fourth annual round-up of 25 men and women who have had a significant positive impact on hunting and fishing. If you know someone who you feel deserves to be among the Leaders, Innovators, Conservationists and Unsung Heroes featured in our December/January 2011 issue, go to **outdoorlife.com/ol25** and fill out and submit the nomination form.

YOUR CANDIDATE COULD BE
AMONG THIS YEAR'S OL 25 HONOREES!
DEADLINE TO NOMINATE: JUNE 15



THE Sportsman's Cheat Sheet

**101 original hunting, fishing,
shooting and gear tips
to take your outdoor
game to the next level**

By Keith Sutton

I like to learn cool tips that make hunting, fishing and shooting even more fun and productive. For example, while repairing a reel recently, I was having a hard time reading the tiny type on the schematic and parts list.

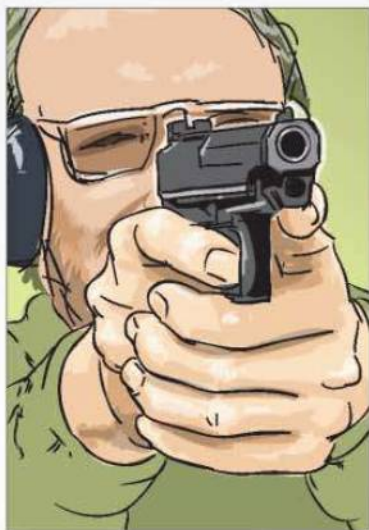
"I have the same problem," a friend said. "So I enlarge the parts sheet on my office copy machine until it's easier to read." Problem solved.

Another hunting buddy showed how he finds cottontails when stalking in heavy cover. "Just look for their eyes," he told me. "It's the only flaw in their camouflage."

A handgun instructor I know provided this useful advice: "Squeeze the trigger like you're squeezing one drop of water from an eye dropper. Your shooting will improve." It did, and it's a helpful hint I've never forgotten.

Simple pointers like these can be invaluable. You'll find 101 more to try in this compendium of practical advice, time-saving tips, problem-solving techniques, brilliant improvisations and everyday wisdom.

101 Tips



1 Strengthen Hands For Steady Aim

Competition handgun shooters often strengthen their hands and wrists by squeezing a rubber ball. Do this while watching television or for 10-minute stretches throughout the day, and the steadiness of your handgun aim will improve considerably.

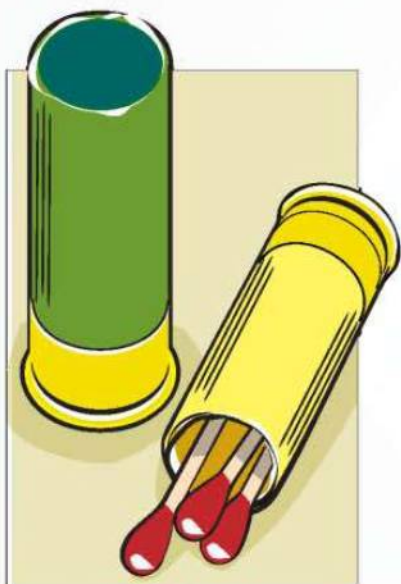
2 Down, Not Up

Always store your blackpowder rifle with the muzzle down. This keeps oil from collecting at the point of ignition. Proper storage can eliminate many misfires.



3 Shotgun Case

In a pinch, two empty shotshells (one 12-gauge and one 20-gauge) will fit snugly together to make a case for matches or other small items.



4 Easy Boat Number Removal

You can scratch your boat's finish if you use a razor blade to remove old vinyl registration numbers. Instead, use a blow dryer set on low to heat each number. This softens the adhesive so numbers will peel off easily.

8 Hone Your Shooting Skills

A .22 is the best tool available for curing shooting problems such as flinching. Ammo is inexpensive and practicing with a .22 helps to reinforce the basics, like trigger squeeze, breath control and follow-through.

A stock that's too long tends to make you shoot low and restricts your ability to swing with a bird.

A stock that's too short makes you shoot high. Have a gunsmith check your stock and adjust it to fit you.

the shot has been fired; then keep the muzzle moving to complete your follow-through.

11 Practice With A Low Gun

It pays to shoot some clays with a dismounted, or "low," gun.

Next time you're on the skeet or sporting clays course, call for a few birds with your gun held in a field-carrying position. Practicing like this will help you feel more comfortable when birds rise in the field.

10 Keep Your Head Down

Lifting your head off the stock is one of the primary causes of missed targets when shotgunning. Keep your head down until

12 Exaggerate Your Follow-Through

When shotgunning, follow-through is vital. Keep swinging as you pull the trigger, the same way a golfer or a tennis player follows through on his swing after hitting the ball.

Don't stop the gun or you'll shoot behind the target.

or near your ammunition. Such products can dissolve waterproofing sealers around the primer and bullet-case mouth and contaminate both the primer and the gunpowder inside the cartridge.

At best, you might have a failure to fire (a dud); at worst, a dangerous hang-fire.

13 Keep Your Ammo Safe

Don't be tempted to spray penetrating lubricants such as WD-40 on

14 The Right Bull's-Eye

When sighting-in a scoped firearm, the best aiming point is a

Illustrations: Patrick Welsh

5 Feather Attractor

You've no doubt seen motorized rabbits that shake all over to help callers attract foxes, coyotes and bobcats. These work, but are a pain to lug around and set up, not to mention the cost of buying your robotic bunny.

A simpler, less expensive attractor can be made from a turkey tail feather tied to one end of a notched wooden dowel with a piece of thread.

Push the dowel upright in the ground. When the feather blows in the breeze, it will provide just the right amount of movement to help coax wily predators to come in for a look.



white square within a black box. A scope's black reticle is more clearly seen against a square white target background, assuring more precise aiming and target definition.

15 Practice Your Position

A solid shooting rest isn't always available in the field when you need it. Sometimes you might have to shoot from a prone, sitting, kneeling or standing position.

None of these posi-

tions come naturally, so take time to practice each at the range.

16 Fixing Flinch

Cure yourself of flinching by having a partner load your gun at the range. Have him occasionally load a dummy round with the live to check your technique.

17 Handy Storage Box

A tackle box makes a great storage kit for gun-cleaning supplies. The

dividers in the lure trays neatly separate different sizes of bore brushes, swabs and patches.

Get one with plenty of room for bottles of solvents and other necessary cleaning gear.

18 Mark Your Ramrod

Before hunting with your blackpowder rifle, mark the ramrod at the point where the bullet or ball seats properly against the powder charge. Improper bullet seating creates a

potentially dangerous situation. A glance at the marked ramrod will assure you that you've positioned the projectile properly for a safe shot.

19 Paint Your Horns

For safety's sake, it's a good idea to spray your rattling horns with brightly colored paint, preferably hunter orange or chartreuse.

This may prevent you from being mistaken for a deer by a careless hunter.

20 Don't Chalk Box Calls

Some turkey hunters use chalk on their box calls to increase friction, but experts say it's not needed on a properly tuned call.

In damp weather, chalk acts as a sponge, absorbing moisture that can gum up your call. This dampens the ringing tone of a good box call. If your call is constructed from good-quality wood, the call actually will sound better without chalk.



6 Keep Your Bag Dry

Line your sleeping-bag stuff sack with a heavy-duty garbage bag to keep your sleeping bag dry in any weather. Place the plastic bag inside your stuff sack, then stuff the sleeping bag inside. Compress the bag and close with a twist tie.



7 Frozen Targets

When plinking with a .22, make fun-to-shoot targets by using trays that mold ice into shapes like fish, stars, trees, boats and hearts. The ice explodes when hit, and there is no litter to clean up.

21 Trail Threads

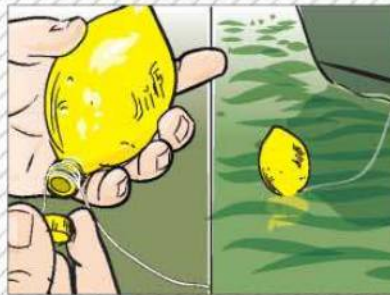
Here's a simple, inexpensive way to nail down a good location for your deer stand. Look for deer trails in the area you plan to hunt, and tie a piece of light-colored sewing thread waist-high (or lower) between two trees on either side of a trail. Do likewise at other trail spots. If you return and find a thread broken, you'll know deer are still using that trail, and you can place your stand nearby.



22 Cushion Your Gun

Never rest your rifle barrel directly against a solid object when you're shooting in the field.

Cushion the forend by placing something between the rest and the rifle. A day pack, a rolled-up jacket, a crunched-up hat or even your hand will suffice.



23 Lemon Float

Lemon-shaped juice containers make great floats for the big baits used when fishing for stripers or catfish. Loosen the cap, wrap your line around the screw threads, then tighten the cap. The bright yellow really stands out on the water.

24 Hot-Water Heater

To keep hot water handy for use around camp:

- * Fill several zip-seal plastic bags with water and place them inside a black plastic garbage bag.
- * Lay the bag in direct sunlight on smooth ground. Make sure there are no sharp sticks or stones beneath the bags that could puncture them.
- * In just a few hours, the water in the zip-seal bags will be hot.
- * Carefully remove a bag from the garbage sack (you might need gloves to hold it), unzip one corner and pour the hot water where you need it.



29 His-and-Her Turkey Decoys

A good decoy set-up for spring turkey hunting is a combination of hen and strutting jake, which works on both of a gobbler's spring mandates—breeding and dominance.

And because a gobbler will almost invariably address the jake decoy head-on, you can position it so you'll have the best shot when the gobbler stops and prepares to do battle.

30 Rooster Or Hen?

When pheasant hunting, if only roosters are legal, look for the rooster's white neck ring.

If you judge sex by watching for long tail feathers, you might shoot some long-tailed hens or hold fire on shabby-tailed roosters.

31 ATV Add-Ons

A simple way to jazz up your ATV is to add racks to maximize space for

hauling your gear.

Want extra comfort? Add a throttle extender so you can rev up your ATV with your whole palm and not just your thumb, or replace your rough handlebar grips with gel models that relieve shock and fatigue.

32 First-Aid Kit for Gear

One item you should carry on all extended outings is a gear first-aid kit. Use a small

waterproof container to hold items you might need to make repairs around camp.

Here's a checklist to get you started, but you'll want to weed out some items and include others based on your own gear.

- * Duct tape
- * Heavy-duty needle and thread
- * Stove/lantern parts and repair tools
- * Nylon cord and strap material
- * Extra bulbs and bat-

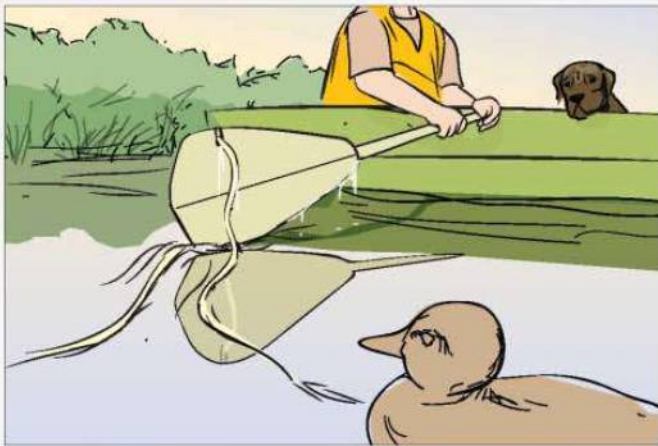
teries for headlamps and lights

- * Fabric patches with adhesive
- * Sleeping pad and tent repair kits
- * Extra buckles for pack repairs

33 Zipper-Pull Additions

The little grab-tabs on the ends of zippers can be hard to find and difficult to hold, especially when you're wearing gloves or mittens.

Make them bigger



25| Notch a Paddle To Retrieve Decoys

Reaching out of a boat to pick up decoys isn't safe. A better way is to use a customized long-handled boat paddle. Cut an upward-slanting, 1/2-inch-wide notch near the lower end of the paddle's blade. You then can reach out with your paddle to snag decoy lines in the notch, almost without missing a stroke.



26| All Yolking Aside...

To keep eggs fresh in camp, dip them in boiling water for exactly 5 seconds, and then let them cool. This creates a film inside the shell, which makes the eggs airtight.

Treated this way, they should keep for weeks without refrigeration.

27| Fake Snow

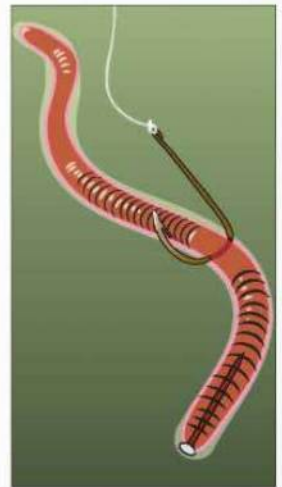
After a light snowfall, Christmas tree snow from an aerosol can is great for concealing bare patches around your pit blind created by foot traffic, which can spook ducks and geese. The spray-on snow also works well for camouflaging pit lids.



28| Nail a Wacky Worm

The wacky worm (a straight-tail plastic worm hooked through the middle) catches lots of bass.

In some situations, it might catch even more if you insert a small nail straight into the worm's nose. This makes the lure stand straight up with its tail wagging, a special action sure to attract nearby bucketmouths.



by adding a ribbon, piece of cord, whistle, thermometer, key chain, paper clip or even a strip of duct tape.

34| Fish-Net Anchor

If your landing net has a hole in it and you're planning to buy a new one, use the old netting to make a simple boat anchor. All you need are some rocks, a big carabiner and an anchor rope.

Fill the net with rocks

or other weights, then gather the net perimeter and clip it together with the carabiner.

Tie the anchor rope to the carabiner and you're set.

35| Ax Sharpener At the Ready

Forgetting a file to sharpen your camp ax or hatchet can be a real hassle. Tape a small file to the tool's handle with duct tape wrapped all around so the file won't get wet and rusty.

36| Straighten Springy Line

Monofilament line can get coiled and spring off your spinning reel when you open the bail.

Fix this by removing the spool full of line and soaking it in warm water for 10 minutes. This softens the line so it's more manageable.

37| Save Sliding Bobbers

If you snag a hook on a sliding-bobber rig and have to break the line,

the sinker might come off and you'll lose the bobber.

A good remedy is to use two bobber stops on the line—one above the bobber at the depth you want to fish and one a few inches above the sinker. Then, if the sinker breaks off, the extra stop will keep the bobber on the line.

38| The Magic Of GPS

Now there are numerous GPS programs you

can download free from the Internet to create custom topo maps, show your family in real-time where you are and much more.

For information, visit maps-gps-info.com, where you'll find all sorts of in-depth info on GPS technology.

39| Smartphone Apps

Hunters and anglers who use an Apple iPhone, Motorola Droid or other "smartphone"

40| Added Action for Snow Geese

Here's a great way to add bird-attracting movement to your snow goose decoy spread.

✱ Dig a post hole in the middle of your spread and erect a 10-foot pole with a 150-foot length of nylon cord attached to the top of it.

✱ Tie 30 white rags (a cut-up bedsheet works well) an equal distance apart on the line, and keep the end of the line handy beside you.

✱ When geese approach, make the line undulate by snapping the line up and down.

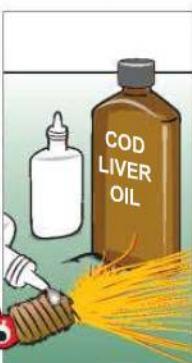
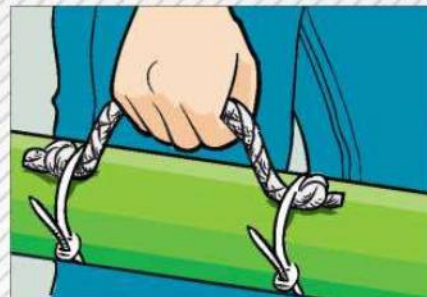
These rising and falling "geese" help attract the attention of snows that might pay no attention to just one or two waving flags.



42| Rod Tube Handle

Round rod cases often have no handle and can be difficult to carry if you're traveling with other luggage. Installing a cheap handle is easy.

All you need are two plastic zip ties and a short piece of soft rope knotted at each end. Position the rope where you want a handle and cinch a cable tie over each end in front of the knot. The new strap makes carrying the case much easier.



43| A Cheaper Scent Alternative

While anglers can choose from a wide variety of commercial scent products, there's another alternative that works almost as well.

Fill an empty nasal-spray bottle with plain cod liver oil. Squeeze a drop of oil to the tip of the bottle, rub your lure in it and you're ready to fish.

This works especially well with marabou and bucktail jigs, and can sometimes make the difference between lots of bites and none at all.

41| Magic Candles

Remember those trick candles someone put on your birthday cake—the ones that stayed lit no matter how hard you blew on them? Because they won't blow out, these candles make great additions to your fire-starting kit.

Light one with a match or lighter, keep it sheltered in the cup of your hand and use it to ignite your tinder, even when it's windy or a bit rainy outside.

Liberally wet your fingertips to extinguish the candle and save it for another use. You'll find the candles in the bakery departments of many discount and grocery stores.



can find a variety of useful apps. If you use a trail camera that automatically uploads its photos to a website, for example, there's an app that allows you to monitor images from your phone.

You can track moon phases, tides and sunrise/sunset times, use your phone as a compass, find the cheapest gas, mark and find your tree stand, get weather forecasts, calculate an unofficial score for your

deer or elk, call game, download maps and much more.

Visit apple.com/iphone/apps-for-iphone/. Also, see Snap Shots, page 7.

48| Tricked-Out Jigs

Make your plain-Jane crappie jigs more attractive to big slabs by adding a curly-tail grub. Run the soft-plastic up the hook so it butts against the feathers, hair or tube.

The extra undulating motion might be just what you need to entice inactive panfish.

49| Best Online Deals

Want great buys on a variety of gear for hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities? Visit sierratradingpost.com, camofire.com or sportsmansguide.com.

Be sure to check the clearance sections on major sites like cabelas.com and basspro.com.

50| Eye Opener

An inexpensive tool for cleaning paint from jig eyes is a seam-ripper, available in sewing departments. Screw an eye into the handle to attach a lanyard.

51| Pocket a Line Cutter

Those credit-card-shaped letter openers, available at many office supply stores, are great for cutting fishing line—they'll even cut braided

line—and they fit inside a shirt pocket.

52| Stake Out Your Boat

A corkscrew-type dog stake, available at pet supply stores, provides a handy shoreline tie-up for your canoe, johnboat or other small craft.

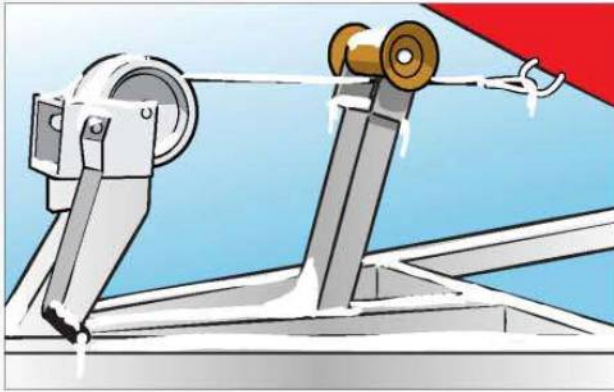
53| Snip It Quick

When dressing rabbits, squirrels and other small-game animals, a

44| Icy Weather Insurance

When launching a boat in freezing winter weather, be sure to keep the trailer winch cable hooked until the boat is in the water; then hook up again before you pull the boat out.

Boat trailers, especially bunker-type trailers, can get icy and slippery on the drive to the launching area or while sitting in the parking lot. If the boat isn't hooked, it could slide off onto the concrete ramp instead of into the water.



45| Sling Stopper

It's aggravating—you have a sling on your gun, but it keeps sliding off your shoulder when you walk.

Remedy this by sewing a large button on each shoulder of your hunting coat. Place your rifle sling over the button, and it will slip no more.



knife isn't the only tool you should use. Kitchen or pruning shears are better for safely and quickly snipping off each animal's feet and head when cleaning it for the table.

54| Loaner Tackle

Got a hankering to do some fishing but didn't bring tackle? If there's a lake or stream at a nearby state or national park, stop at the park office. Many parks with

good fishing waters have tackle available for loan to park visitors. More often than not, there's no cost involved.

55| Minnow Drop For Perch

A yellow perch struggling on a hook stimulates other fish in the school to start feeding. When using minnows for bait, you can take advantage of this reaction by dropping some dead minnows into the water now and then.

Squeeze the minnows to empty their air bladders and then release them by the handful into the feeding zone. As the perch dart around gobbling the minnows, a feeding frenzy will begin.

A hooked minnow lowered to the school will be taken quickly.

56| Three Fires for Extra Warmth

In a survival situation, or when you or others are dangerously wet

and cold, build three small fires and position yourselves in the middle. This allows you to share the heat and stay warm front and back better than with a single large fire. Also, three fires in a triangle is a distress signal.

57| Trail Cam Tips

Not getting many photos on your new trail camera? The problem could be overuse. Many first-time users check

their cameras daily to see results, but regular intrusions can disturb deer and other game animals.

Be sure your trail cam is placed in a spot that's easy to enter and exit without being detected, and avoid inspecting the unit for at least a week. Also be careful not to leave telltale human odor by touching the housing or mounting components with bare hands.

A scent-blocking



46| Free Fire-Starters

Clothes-dryer lint stuffed in a waterproof container and kept in a pocket or survival kit is excellent tinder for fire-starting. You can pack a surprisingly large amount in a very small container, like a 35mm film canister. It costs nothing, weighs almost nothing and, if you add a few strike-anywhere matches, you have a ready-made kit for building a blaze.

47| Bad Arrow ID

Practicing with your bow before hunting season? It's easier to identify a single flawed arrow if you number all your arrows. Use a waterproof marker to write the number on the vane. Now, if arrow 4 continually shoots low, while your other arrows are grouped, you know it's not poor form causing the problem, but the arrow. You'll also know which arrows are most accurate.





58 | Loading A Deer Alone

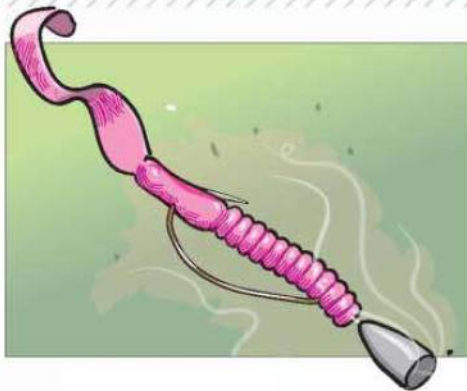
If your solo deer hunt is successful, you'll find it much easier to load your deer into your truck if you bring a sheet of $\frac{3}{8}$ - or $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch plywood cut to fit in the pickup bed.

- * Drop the tailgate.
- * Slide one end of the plywood to the ground.
- * Roll the deer onto the wood.
- * Now you can raise the lower end of the plywood sheet and slide it into the truck using your leg muscles rather than your back.

This reduces the risk of back injury and keeps your clothing cleaner, too.

59 | Reverse Rigging

When bass aren't biting, here's a simple trick for Carolina- or Texas-rigging that might change your luck. Reverse the bullet weight so that the concave end digs into the bottom to create extra disturbance.



60 | Boot Protector

Extend the life of your rubber hip boots and waders by treating them three or four times a season with an auto tire protectant such as Armor All. Your boots will resist cracking and dry rot much longer.



61 | Easy-to-Make Brush Piles

Leave 3-foot-high stumps when clearing small openings or cutting trees for firewood. Pile branches around each stump, laying one end on the stump and the other on the ground.

When you've encircled the stump, pile the rest of the cuttings at right angles on the framework to create a brush pile that can be used by quail, rabbits and other animals.



spray should be used on the housing and mount.

66 | Two Calls Are Better Than One

No matter what game animals you'll be calling—ducks, deer, predators, whatever—when you find a call you like, buy two. You might break a reed, lose the call or have one freeze up in the blind. With two, you'll always have a spare—just in case.

67 | Quicker Picker-Upper

A large magnet is a handy tool to have near your fly-tying bench.

Run it over the floor, bench and furniture occasionally to pick up hooks, weed guards and other tiny metal components you might not realize you've dropped.

68 | Finding Cold Cottontails

Cottontails have thin fur that offers poor insulation from the cold.

To find them during inclement weather, it helps to think like a rabbit. Where would you go to escape the cold if all you had to wear was a light jacket?

Start by hunting places that are both sheltered from the wind and open to warm rays of sunshine; then move to other locales offering protection.

69 | Trolling Motor Wave Machine

If your duck camp has

a permanent blind, an electric trolling motor can be used to create movement in your decoy spread.

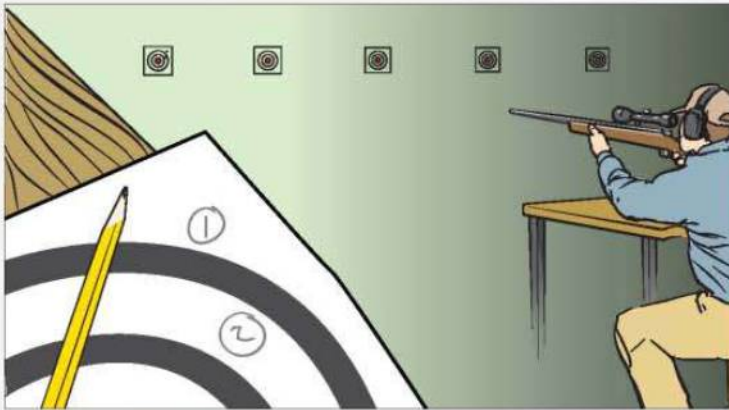
Construct a frame from 2x4 lumber, paint it black or camo (be sure the motor is camouflaged, too), use a sledgehammer to drive it into the bottom in your spread and then adjust the propeller so it's just below the surface and pushing water through your decoys. This makes the

decoys swim and is also a good way to keep the water from freezing in frigid weather.

70 | Connect With Calling Quail

When a bobwhite quail covey is scattered, the birds begin calling to rejoin each other as soon as possible.

When birds scatter near dusk, the calls begin at once, because bobwhites prefer to roost together. However, as darkness falls, the



62 | Note Bullet Strikes

When you fire repeated shots at the same target, it's difficult to remember the sequence in which they were fired. Keep an identical target beside you on the shooting bench. As you fire each shot, locate the bullet strike on the downrange target, then locate and number each corresponding strike on your shooting-bench target. Logging each shot helps determine the effectiveness of scope adjustments. If you flinch and shoot a "flyer," it's easier to ID its downrange location.



63 | Selecting The Right Canoe Paddle

Want to choose a canoe paddle that's right for you? Stand straight and hold a stern paddle upright with its blade touching the ground. It should reach to about eye level.

A bow paddle should come to your chin or just below.

birds quit calling so predators can't find them, and some birds must roost alone.

At dawn, begin calling in the same area where you flushed the birds the night before, a good point to remember when you have to hunt without a dog.

71 | Hilltop Rabbits

Cottontails usually seek an uphill course to evade pursuit because their longer hind legs

afford them more speed uphill than down.

So, when hunting hillsides, two or more hunters should separate, with at least one working along the hilltop.

72 | Set Up Right For Quail

When walking up on a covey of bobwhites ahead of pointing dogs, take care not to get between the birds and the nearest cover.

Quail almost always fly to that cover regard-

less of where hunters are, presenting difficult head-on targets.

73 | Listen Up

The best squirrel hunters tend to be good listeners.

The sound of rustling leaves can give a squirrel away. So can the sound of the rodent's sharp teeth gnawing on a nut or cuttings falling to the forest floor. Also listen for barking or chattering squirrels.

64 | Fly Fixer

Want to rejuvenate feathers and bucktails on fishing flies matted with use? Use a hemostat or pliers to hold each fly in a steady stream of steam from the spout of a boiling tea kettle. You can also fix several at a time by placing them in a small colander over a simmering pot of water. This is also a good way to take the set out of natural (but never synthetic) fly-tying materials that have been stored awhile.



65 | Fewer Burrs

To help shed burrs easily, rub the laces of your hunting or hiking boots with paraffin before hitting the trail.

74 | Cats Love Dogs

Did you know this? That catfish you're hoping to catch loves hot dogs as much as you do. While you're roasting a wiener on a stick, you can use another one for bait. Just slice it into chunks, run a hook all the way through one piece and cast it out onto the bottom.

If a catfish is around, he'll gobble it up quicker than a kid eating a chocolate bar. Then

you'll be frying catfish for dinner instead of eating frankfurters.

75 | Trail Marker

When hunting or tracking game through unfamiliar country, you might need to mark your trail. Instead of using paint or reflective tacks or tape, carry some bright, neon-colored chalk to leave recognizable signs on trees or rocks. (The color or colors used or

76 | 3 Bs for Waterfowl

To establish a proper lead when taking crossing shots at ducks or geese, remember the three Bs: butt, beak, bang! Swing your shotgun from behind the bird. Move through its butt and beak. As the muzzle comes through the bird's beak, pull the trigger while continuing to follow through.



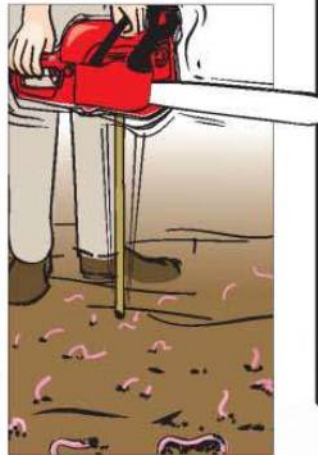
78 | Wind Indicator

A good way to tell the wind's direction is to use the fluffy seeds from a milkweed or dandelion plant. Place the seeds in a sealable plastic bag, then drop some of the fluff into the air and watch which way it goes. The seeds are natural, so they have no strange smell, like the powders used by some hunters.

77 | Sawing Up Worms

In the hills of Arkansas, some folks collect fishing worms using "The McCulloch (Chainsaw) Technique."

- * Begin by driving a 3-foot wooden stake 6 to 8 inches deep in loamy soil.
- * Place the wide bottom of a running chainsaw, with the cutting chain either removed or disengaged, on top of the stake.
- * Wait for the worms to surface as they are coaxed from the soil by the chainsaw's vibrations.



79 | Sole Provider

Are the felt soles of your waders worn out? Replace them with scrap outdoor carpeting cut to size, cleaned thoroughly and glued on with water-proof epoxy. The carpet provides as much traction as felt, will outlast it and absorbs less water. Scraps can also be purchased at home-improvement stores for next to nothing.



special markings will also help you communicate with hunting partners.) The next rainfall will erase your trail markings.

83 | Scent Eliminator

To reduce the amount of human scent on your hunting clothes, toss the garments in a clothes dryer with a pillow case or cloth bag filled with fresh pine needles or sagebrush leaves.

Be sure the bag is

tied shut, and let the clothes tumble 15 minutes or more on a gentle setting before removing.

84 | How to Fillet A Deer

When butchering a deer or other big-game animal, keep a fish fillet knife handy. The thin, flexible blade works much better than a hunting or butcher knife for deboning meat in hard-to-reach places or butterfly steaks from the backstrap.

85 | Entice Trout With Wax Worms

Wax worms are great trout baits. These larvae of bee moths frequently are sold at docks and bait shops in trout country.

Impale three or four on a fine-wire hook, and leave the ends wiggling enticingly. Then squish a miniature marshmallow onto your line just above the hook.

The marshmallow serves as a float and

your wax worms will now be buoyant and visible to hungry trout.

86 | Whet or Dry?

Contrary to what many people believe, you shouldn't put oil or water on a whetstone when you're sharpening a knife. If you do, metal fragments will become trapped in the liquid, resulting in a ragged edge on the blade. Always keep your whetstone dry.

87 | Camo for Your Stand

Don't toss that old artificial Christmas tree. Use wire cutters to snip off some branches so you can use them to camouflage your ladder stand.

Use plastic cable ties to attach the branches to the platform and ladder, then open them up to fill in any gaps.

88 | Dry When You Need It

A 2-pound coffee can makes a terrific toilet-

80| Heated Attraction

The deer scent you use will disperse better if it's warm, rather than cold. Here's a simple way to warm it while on your stand.

- * Bring a Thermos full of hot coffee or cocoa, some plastic cling wrap and a heavy rubber band.
- * Place a piece of the plastic over the top of the opened Thermos and press gently in the center to create an indentation.
- * Secure the plastic wrap with the rubber band.
- * Now pour a little scent into the indentation.
- * It will be warmed by the hot liquid and dissipate much better, increasing its effectiveness.



paper holder for your backcountry camp.

- * Punch a hole in one side of the can near the bottom.
- * Then punch another hole opposite this one.
- * Run some wire or cord through these holes, and secure the can to a tree (with the bottom side of the can resting against the trunk) near the latrine.
- * Put the roll of toilet paper in, snap on the plastic lid, and the paper stays handy yet dry.

89| Coat Your Weights

Left unprotected, lead decoy weights will oxidize, leaving stains on your hands and decoys when handled.

You can easily protect the weights by dipping them in some of the rubberized plastic coating often used to protect the handles of tools such as pliers. Just dip each weight in the liquid coating, allow the excess to drip off and set the weight

aside to dry. No more corrosion. One can of liquid rubber will cover several dozen weights.

90| Avoid Steel Shot Lock-ups

When rinsing just-dressed waterfowl at home or camp, always place the birds in the side of the kitchen sink opposite the garbage disposal. Unlike softer lead shot, steel-shot pellets, especially large shot sizes, can wreck your disposal.

81| Blood Trailing Made Easy

A small spray bottle full of hydrogen peroxide makes it easier to follow a blood trail on freshly fallen leaves. Spray the peroxide and watch for foaming, which indicates blood is present. This technique becomes especially useful when leaves are wet and trailing is difficult.



82| Curiosity Scent

One popular homemade deer attractant, long used by Southern hunters, is designed to arouse a deer's curiosity.

- * Make it by mixing 2 ounces anise

oil, 1 ounce pure vanilla and 1 tablespoon creamy peanut butter.

- * Keep it in a small sealed container. Dab liberally on a 4-inch-long strip of cloth.
- * Hang the cloth over a limb within shooting range of your stand.

91| Pipe Cleaner Uses

Cleaning a smoker's pipe is just one of many uses for pipe cleaners. Here are more reasons to keep some handy:

- * Wrap a short piece around a hook and you have a serviceable fishing lure.
- * Use as a twist tie on a bread bag or garbage sack.
- * Thread one through two eyelets for an emergency shoelace.
- * Clean the gas burners

and fuel jets on your camp stove.

- * Remove hard-to-reach gunk from your gun or fishing reel.
- * Run through the eyes of like-sized sinkers, spinners, etc., to keep them organized.
- * Use a pair to securely hang a lantern.

92| Lure Compartments

Use clear, snap-lock videotape boxes to organize your soft-plastic lures by color, size



93 Handy Dandy Worm Holder

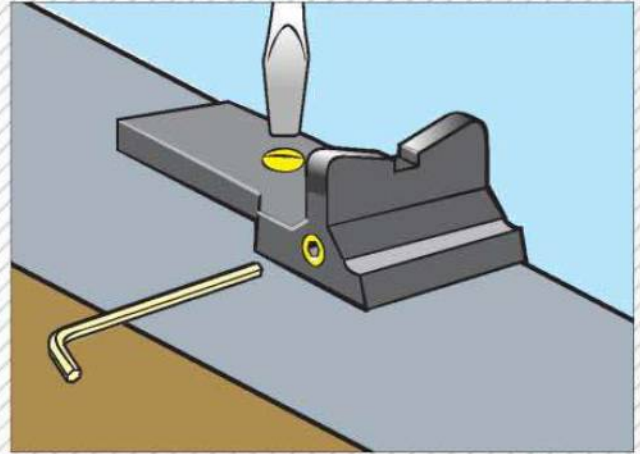
Save an empty Pringles potato chip container and two snap-on lids to make a perfect worm holder. Use a can opener to remove the canister's bottom, then put a snap-on lid on each end. Worms will go to the bottom of an upright container. Simply turn the container over when you need bait.



95 Adjusting Open Sights

To sight-in a rifle with open sights, move the rear sight in the direction in which you want the bullet to go. Move the front sight in the opposite direction. To make the rifle shoot higher, raise the rear sight.

If your sights have to be moved by tapping, use a nylon-tipped drift and tap gently so you don't damage the finish.



94 Squirrel Getter

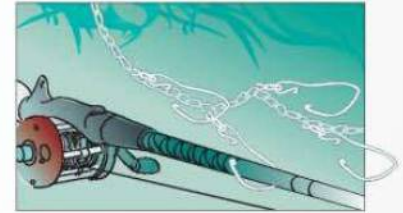
When a bushytail plays hide-and-seek by scurrying from one side of the tree to the other, tie a red bandanna and a long string to a nearby bush. Then go to the other side of the tree and shake the bush by pulling the string. The squirrel will come around to your side, so you can get a shot.



96 Rod Grabber

So, you dropped your rod and reel overboard. First, throw out a marker buoy to mark the spot. Then tie a

metal fish stringer on a heavy fishing line, open the stringer's snaps and drag it across the bottom. The prongs on the snaps should snag your gear if you hit the right spot.



or style. The boxes are transparent, so you can quickly find the lures you need.

97 Splinter Remedy

Before trying to dig out a splinter (using a heat-sterilized needle and tweezers), chill the skin around the area with a piece of ice or an ice pack. This helps dull the pain so that the sliver can be more quickly and easily removed.

98 Bass Combo

A superbly effective combination lure for spring black bass is a shallow-running crankbait or topwater plug with a 1/16- to 1/8-ounce jig trailing 3 feet behind.

Remove the plug's rear treble hook, and hook a snap swivel into the empty eye.

Tie a 3-foot mono leader to the swivel. Attach the jig directly to the mono.

99 Fly Keeper

Wind can blow your favorite dry flies right out of a sectioned plastic box. Prevent this by putting strips of magnetic tape in the bottom of each section. This will hold the hooks without mashing or breaking hackles.

100 Sinker Trick

To make your bait rig more alluring, carefully scrape the lead

sinker with a knife blade to expose shiny new metal. The added sparkle might be just what you need to entice inactive fish.

101 Field-Judging Antelope

A trophy pronghorn is generally one with horns that are 16 inches or longer and 7 inches in circumference at the base. The prongs should be at least 5 inches in length.

You can estimate

horn and prong length by comparing their size to a mature buck's ears, which average about 6 inches long.

You can also use the distance from the front edge of the horn to the end of the nose as an indicator. This measurement averages about 8 inches.

If the horn bases appear wide from the side and fairly thick from front or back, they should score well in circumference points.



Be a **Bass** **Master**

Looking to take your largemouth fishing to the next level? We've got the places to go, tactics to try, lures to fish and new technology to learn that will leave bass pros quaking in their boats **By the Editors**

» **We never saw it coming.** With all the subtlety of an 18-wheeler, Manabu Kurita of Japan blew our doors off last fall when he landed a 22-pound 4-ounce largemouth bass that tied the 78-year-old world record established by George Perry in a backwater south Georgia slough.

California, Texas, Florida, Cuba, Mexico—those are the waypoints bass anglers talk about when the subject is world-record bucketmouths. But Japan? Japan is the place where fish with names like koi and ayu swim; where cormorants have better catch rates than Rapalas; where serving sushi is more common than catch-and-release.

But the International Game Fish Association has put its stamp of approval on Kurita's place in the records book (technically tied with the Perry bass for all-tackle honors), and it's time to move on. So hitch up your Wranglers, grab your gear and follow us. There's still hope that an even bigger bass is swimming where we fish, and all we've got to do is throw the right lure in the right place at the right time. Once we have the tackle we need, our destinations plotted and our approaches mapped out, we're going fishing.



Japanese businessman Akabishi Tesuma enjoyed bass fishing so much that in 1925 he stocked bass in Japan. His legacy was realized last year when Manabu Kurita (above) tied George Perry's 78-year-old world record.

Fish These Five Places

LARGEMOUTH BASS CAN BE FOUND just about anywhere the water temperature warms into at least the 70s during part of the year, and where there's plenty of available forage. Though bass are not native to every country they inhabit nowadays, stocking programs have helped spread them around the globe. The following waters are our initial stops on the bucketmouth trail.

»1 Lake Biwa, Japan

This one is a no-brainer. The 165,000-acre lake northeast of Kyoto, Japan, gave up the record-tying largemouth bass last year. Manabu Kurita, who specializes in lunker bass, caught the fish on a live bluegill. Neither bass nor bluegills are native to Japan, but both were stocked in some of the country's waterways beginning in 1925.

Kurita has caught other monster bass from Lake Biwa, including an 18½-pounder that hit a big swimbait. Kurita says he has seen other 20-plus-pound bass in Biwa, too, so expect someone to open a lodge catering to American anglers there soon.

And just in case you think catching the new world-record largemouth will bring instant fame and fortune, consider that it's not really happening for Kurita. Maybe it's the bluegill thing, and the fact that not much about his feat is marketable to American tackle companies.



»2 Presidents Lake, AL

There might be better places to look for a world-record bass, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a lake that holds as many hungry lunkers as this one. The 75-acre Presidents Lake, as it's known, was built by BASS founder Ray Scott and is located near the central Alabama hamlet of Pintlala, not far from Montgomery.

Presidents Bush I and Bush II have fished the lake, as have a few of the biggest names in bass fishing. Rick Clunn, widely regarded as the best bass angler of all time, caught his biggest bucketmouth ever here—it weighed 13 pounds 15 ounces—back in the '90s. If you're interested in fishing the Presidents Lake, it will cost you \$1,950. That includes three nights' accommodations, all meals and two days of fishing on what is arguably the best little bass pond on the planet.

Opener: Ghan Lau/Windigoimages.com; this page: iStock (Lake Biwa)

Bass Capital? Take Your Pick

Some locales enjoy better fishing than others, and tourism promoters want everybody to know about it. For example, Crescent City, Florida, bills itself as "The Bass Capital of the World," presumably because of its proximity to nearby Crescent Lake. However, other Florida towns, including Palatka, Apopka, Belle Glade and Lake Wales, have staked the same claim. Likewise, Lake Okeechobee and Lake Walk-in-Water are also called the "Bass Capital of the World," as is the whole of Polk County, Florida.

Elsewhere, Branson and Cape Fair, Missouri, and Pine Bluff, Arkansas, maintain that they are the "Bass Capital of the World." Eufaula, Alabama, has modified its assertion somewhat, noting that it is the "Bass Fishing Capital of the World."



George Perry, 1932

What About Montgomery Lake?

The southern Georgia lake where George Perry caught his world-record bucketmouth in 1932 is best left to the past. A modern angler's first reaction upon seeing the lake might be, "No way." The heavily silted slough off the Ocmulgee River is more a hangout for gars and stumpknockers these days, though it still looms large in the pantheon of fishingdom.

»3 Dixon Lake, CA

Japan is a long way to trailer a boat, which is why we'd stop in San Diego and fish Dixon Lake first. This 72-acre impoundment produced the heaviest largemouth on record, though it was never officially recognized and the angler who caught it, Mac Weakley, never applied to the IGFA for a record.

The bass was said to have weighed slightly more than 25 pounds (a number of people witnessed the weigh-in), but the scales weren't certified, the fish was unintentionally foul-hooked, its length and girth weren't recorded and, finally, it was released. "Dottie," as the bass became known, has since gone to that Big Lake in the Sky. She weighed 19 pounds when a lake supervisor found her floating belly-up near the shoreline.

HONORABLE MENTION

Spring Lake, CA

Combine Florida bass, stocked fingerling trout and an environment in which there's practically no end to the growing season, and you have something that approaches Spring Lake. It was here, back in 1997, that a local fisherman named Paul Duclos caught and released a humongous 24-pound bass that made headlines from coast to coast.

Rob Benson (Dixon Lake)

»4 Lake Fork, TX

Although other Texas lakes, such as Conroe, Choke Canyon and Amistad, occasionally grab the headlines, Lake Fork still chugs along and produces more lunker bass than any other in the Lone Star State. The state record, which weighed a tad over 18 pounds, was caught there in 1992, and a bunch of Lake Fork bass are stacked in behind it.

Thirty-five of the top 50 Texas bass hail from this 27,000-acre Sabine River impoundment northeast of Dallas. Before Florida bass were stocked in Texas lakes, the state record was about 13 1/2 pounds. Bass that size are almost routine at Lake Fork.

»5 Castaic Lake, CA

Take Dixon out of the mix, and you have to like the odds that this 2,230-acre lake north of Los Angeles will produce the next world-record bucketmouth. Six of the 11 biggest largemouths on record were caught from the impoundment.

Book a March trip if you're going to Castaic. On March 12, 1991, Bob Crupi caught and released a fish that was said to have weighed 22 pounds 1/2 ounce. That catch came a week after Michael Arujo boated a 21-pound 12-ounce lunker that California recognizes as its current state record. And on March 9, 2000, Crupi boated a 20-pound 1/2-ounce bass.



Dixon Lake

State Bass Records

In case you don't get to fish any of our dream destinations this year, you might try waters closer to home. Below are the targets to shoot for. These are the current large-mouth bass records for every state except Alaska. Most of these waters are public.

State	Weight	Angler	Place	Year
Alabama	16lb.-8oz.	Thomas M. Burgin	Mountain View Lake	1987
Arizona	16-8	Randall E. White	Canyon Lake	1997
Arkansas	16-4	Aaron Madris	Mallard Lake	1976
California	21-12	Michael Arujo	Castaic Lake	1991
Colorado	11-6	Jarrett Edwards	Echo Canyon Reservoir	1997
Connecticut	12-14	Frank Domurat	Mashapaug Lake	1961
Delaware	10-5	Tony Kaczmarczyk	Andrews Lake	1980
Florida	20*	Frederick Friebe	Big Fish Lake	1923
	17-4	Billy M. O'Berry	Unnamed Lake	1986
Georgia	22-4**	George Perry	Montgomery Lake	1932
Hawaii	9-10	Dickie Broyles	Waia Reservoir	1992
Idaho	10-15	M.W. Taylor	Anderson Lake	Prior to 1962
Illinois	13-1	Edward J. Walbel	Stone Quarry Lake	1976
Indiana	14-12	Jenifer Schultz	Private Lake	1991
Iowa	10-12	Patricia Zaerr	Lake Fisher	1984
Kansas	11-12	Tyson Hallam	Private Pit Lake	2008
Kentucky	13-10	Dale Wilson	Wood Creek Lake	1984
Louisiana	15-15	Greg Wiggins	Caney Lake	1994
Maine	11-10	Robert Kamp	Moose Pond	1968
Maryland	11-2	Rodney L. Cockrell	Farm Pond	1983
Massachusetts	15-8	Walter Bolonis	Sampson's Pond	1975
Michigan	11-15	William J. Maloney	Big Pine Island Lake	1934
(tie)	11-15	Jack Rorex	Alcona Dam Pond	1959
Minnesota	8-15	Mark Raveling	Auburn Lake	2005
Mississippi	18-15	Anthony Denny	Natchez State Park Lake	1992
Missouri	13-14	Marvin Bushong	Bull Shoals Lake	1961
Montana	8-6	Adam Nelson	Many Lakes	1999
Nebraska	10-11	Paul Abegglen Sr.	Sandpit	1965
Nevada	12-0	Michael Geary	Lake Mead	1999
New Hampshire	10-8	G. Bullpitt	Lake Potanipo	1967
New Jersey	10-14	Robert A. Eisele	Menantico Sand Wash Pond	1980
New Mexico	15-13	Steve Estrada	Bill Evans Lake	1995
New York	11-4	John L. Higbie	Buckhorn Lake	1987
North Carolina	15-14	William H. Wofford	Farm Pond	1991
North Dakota	8-7	Leon Rixen	Nelson Lake	1983
Ohio	13-2	Roy Landsberger	Farm Pond	1976
Oklahoma	14-11	William Cross	Broken Bow Lake	1999
Oregon	12-1	Adam Hastings	Ballenger Pond	2002
Pennsylvania	11-3	Donald Shade	Birch Run Reservoir	1983
Rhode Island	10-6	Nicolas Finamore	Carbuncle Pond	1991
South Carolina	16-2	Paul H. Flanagan	Lake Marion	1949
(tie)	16-2	Mason Cummings	Aiken Co. Pond	1993
South Dakota	9-3	Richard Viereck	Hudson Gravel Pit	1999
Tennessee	14-8	J. "Louge" Barnett	Sugar Creek	1954
Texas	18-2	Barry St. Clair	Lake Fork	1992
Utah	10-2	Sam Lamanna	Lake Powell	1974
Vermont	10-4	Tony Gale	Lake Dunmore	1988
Virginia	16-4	Richard Tate	Lake Conner	1985
Washington	11-9	Carl Pruitt	Banks Lake	1977
West Virginia	12-5	David W. Heeter	Pond	1994
Wisconsin	11-3	Robert Miklowski	Lake Ripley	1940
Wyoming	7-14	Dustin Shorma	Stock Pond	1992

*Unofficial state record **Tied for world record

Three Anglers We'd Like to Share a Boat With

Eli Manning



Though he didn't lead his team to the Super Bowl this year, Eli Manning of the New York Giants is a Pro Bowler when it comes to fishing. As he proved during a "Battle of the Gridiron Stars" segment on ESPN a while back, the younger Manning brother is none too shabby on the water.

Maybe he learned more than football when he attended the University of Mississippi. Big brother Peyton has appeared in more championship games than Eli, but we'd bet Eli could fish circles around the elder Manning and the rest of the Colts put together.

Bill Dance



Some guys from Memphis sing for a living, some fish. Bill Dance does his entertaining on the water, and millions of fans are glad of it. Small wonder that this affable Tennessean has had the top fishing show on television for so many years. Not only is he a great angler, but he makes you believe he would give you the first cast at the best spots.

Jane Seymour



"I really believe that fishing is an excellent way for families to spend time together. I know it's had a positive effect on my family, and I wouldn't trade anything for the time I spend with my husband and children fishing and boating," says actress Jane Seymour. Can there be any classier outdoor lady than Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman? We don't think so. After all, who wouldn't want a genuine Bond Girl (*Live and Let Die*, 1973) in the bow seat when the fish begin to hit?

Alamy.com (Manning, Seymour), courtesy Bill Dance (Dance)

Stock Up the Fish Box

Check the lineup of lures the pros use to catch most of their winning stringers in tournaments, and you might agree that it's more notable for what isn't listed than for what is. Topwater lures don't make the cut, for example, nor do "finesse baits" or the giant swimbaits that the guys in California and Texas sometimes use to catch monster bass. Sure, those lure types produce plenty of bucket-mouths, but they're typically not the choices of first resort.

Who knows what the most popular lures of 2010 will be? We've got a hunch that, although the brand names might be different, the basic lure types will be the same. What we do know is that the lures featured here were used to win tournaments, based on the results from recent FLW Tour and Bassmaster Elite Series events. It's a cinch that the Strike King Red Eye Shad that Kevin Van Dam used to win the Bassmaster Classic will make the list next year.



» Crankbaits

Strike King Series 6, Rapala DT Series; Norman DD22; Bomber Fat Free Shad; Lucky Craft Big Daddy Strike 3



» Jerkbaits

Lucky Craft DD Pointer Minnow; Smithwick Rogue



» Swimbaits

Aaron Martens Scrounger Head; Osprey Talon; Lake Fork Live Magic Shad



» Jigs

Strike King Bitsy Bug; Football Jig



» Topwaters

XCalibur Zell Pop



» Soft-Plastics

Gambler Cane Toad; Berkley PowerBait Crazy Legs Chigger Craw, Mullet, Ripple Shad, Slim Shaky Worm; Lake Fork Baby Hyperfreak; YUM Dinger, Big Show Craw, Houdini Worm; Zoom Ultra Vibe Speed Craw, Zoom Ole Monster Worm, Zoom Trick Worm; Strike King Rodent, Rage Tail Lizard, Baby Rage Craw, 3X Centipede, Coffee Tube, KVD Pro-Model Tube; Yamamoto Senko

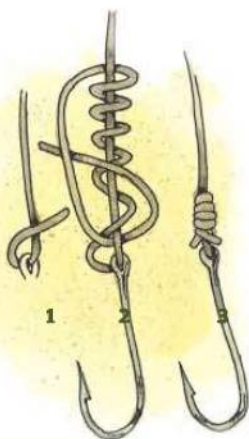


» Spinnerbaits

Strike King Premier Pro Model

Tie These Knots

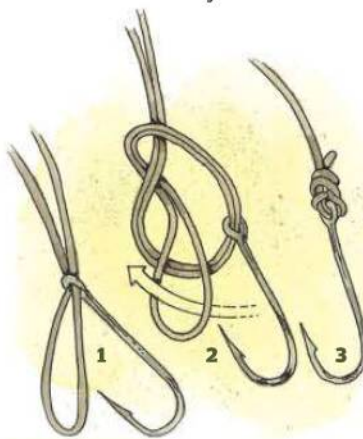
Your lure is only as good as the knot that attaches it to your line. Here are three trusty twists



STRONG

Improved Clinch Knot

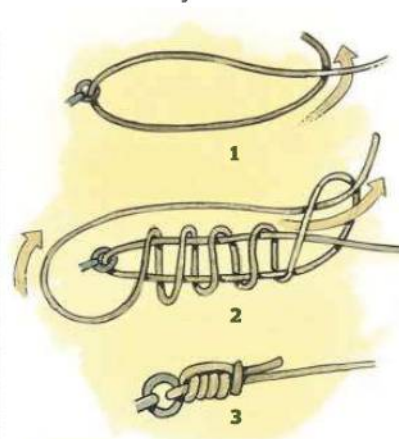
(1) Pass the line end through the hook-eye. (2) Wrap 5 times around the standing line. Pass tag end back through the small loop and also through the large loop. (3) Tighten and trim carefully.



STRONGER

Palomar Knot

(1) Double the end of the line and pass loop through the hook-eye. (2) Double the loop back, then make an overhand knot around the standing line. Pass hook back through loop. (3) Pull standing line.



STRONGEST

San Diego Jam Knot

(1) Pass the main line through the hook/lure eye. (2) Wrap tag end around the doubled main line 5 times and pass through the loop at the eye. (3) Pass tag end through the main line loop and cinch.

Dream Boats

George Perry no doubt would be flabbergasted by the rigs that bass pros use nowadays. These sweet fishing machines are equipped with speedy outboards, electric trolling motors and electronic gadgetry galore. Go ahead and feast your eyes on the 2010 Nitro Z-9 bass boat—the rig Kevin Van Dam used to win the Bassmaster Classic.

» **The Mad Dash** Loaded with multifunction gauges, a tinted windscreen and tilt steering, the Z-9 console is more 'Vette than boat. Among the features are an in-dash Lowrance HDS-7 fish finder with GPS chart plotter.



» **Stowaways** Huge auto-illuminated storage areas include under-lid lure holders and organizers. When closed, the lids become casting decks that are bigger than most New York apartments.

» **Room With a View** In all, the Z-9 measures 20 feet 9 inches long and a full 8 feet wide—and comes with a custom-matched trailer.



» **Power Play** The Mercury 250 Pro XS OptiMax will get you to a hot spot before the other guys have even left the boat ramp, with a top-end speed of more than 70 mph. **WARNING:** Do not wear your fishing hat when the motor's running.

» **Bring 'Em Back Alive** Advanced livewell systems mean nothing is lost at weigh-in. The Z-9 features two 20-gallon livewells.



A Look Aside

At its most basic level, fishing for a big bass is all about rigging and using the right lure, presenting it in the right manner and fishing it in the right place. Of course, it's that last part—knowing where there are bass to be caught—that baffles most of us. You can't see underwater...or can you? With the new side-scanning sonar technology



Humminbird 1197c



Lowrance LSS-1

available, it's possible to survey all water within casting distance and pinpoint the location of any bass that you want to go after.

Being able to look underwater to either side of your boat is a huge advantage. That's what side-scanning sonar will do for you. It's a real time-saver, especially when you team it with downward-scanning sonar. And, of course, the top-end units have GPS, so you can mark any potential fishing holes for future reference.

It's possible to locate literally all the bucketmouths within casting distance of your boat. Just as important, it also shows you where not to fish. Here are a few places to put this amazing new technology to good use.

- » **Isolated pieces** of cover along a shoreline, or around underwater humps and ledges
- » **Junctures** where two types of cover meet and overlap, such as fallen trees within weed beds
- » **Gaps or openings** in weed lines or places where the weed line tapers down to an underwater point
- » **Brush piles** that accumulate at the upriver ends of submerged islands, or in front of and under docks
- » **Riprap banks** where the rock extends into the water in uneven deposits

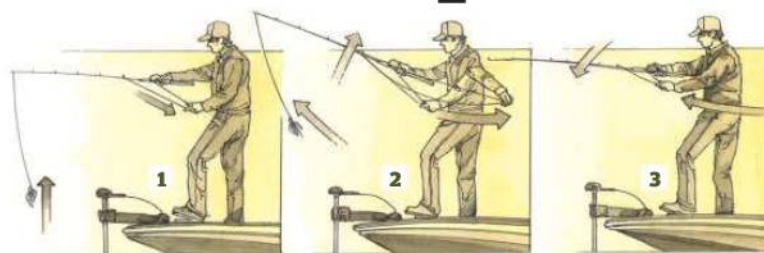
The latest side-scan units made by Humminbird and Lowrance provide detailed coverage of everything to either side of a boat and, in the case of Lowrance's new DownScan feature, even under a boat. Compared with conventional downward-scanning sonar, side-scan is expensive. Humminbird's largest Side Imaging model, the 1197c (10.4-inch screen), retails for about \$3,000 (humminbird.com). The 997c (8-inch screen) sells for about \$2,100, and the 798ci (5-inch screen) sells for about \$1,100. Lowrance's receiver module (LSS-1, about \$600; lowrance.com) incorporates both SideScan and DownScan modes and ranges from about \$600 to \$2,000.

Learn These Techniques

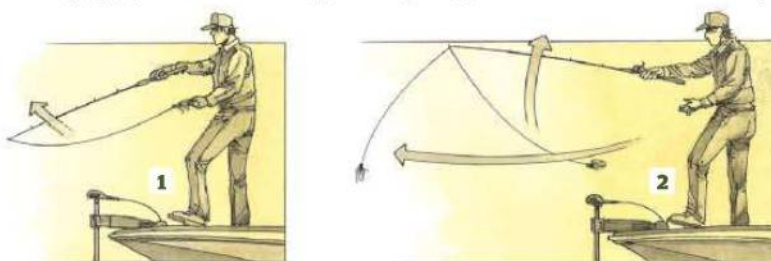
WHILE IT'S LIKELY THAT CASTING lures to bass will always be the most commonly used technique, pitching and flipping won a lot of money in bass tournaments last year. That's the conclusion of BassFan.com, the website devoted to all things tournament. Who are we to argue? You figure the guys who rely on their fishing skills for a living know how to put a bait in front of a bucketmouth, and pitching and flipping are the ways to go.

Willie Sutton was once asked why he robbed banks. "Because that's where the money is," he answered. We might say the same thing about why pro fishermen are so hung up with fishing heavy cover such as flooded weeds and woods: because that's where the bass are. And the way to get to them is to pitch or flip jigs or soft-plastics.

Based on its most recent survey of presentations and techniques used to win major tournaments in the FLW Tour and the Bassmaster Elite Series, flipping and pitching accounted for first-place showings 21.2 percent of the time. They were also the primary techniques used by second- through fifth-place fishermen 18.2 percent of the time in pro competition.



Flipping: (1) Let out the length of line you intend to use for your cast, then grasp line with your left hand. Swing the lure back, toward you, and in one fast motion, flip (2) in the direction of your target. (3) Release line and lower rod tip.



Pitching: (1) With the reel in free spool, let out a rod's length of line, holding the lure in your free hand. (2) Dip the rod tip toward the water and snap it at your target while letting go of the lure. The lure should fall silently into the cover.

BassFan's survey found that flipping and pitching were the most productive techniques in March and April, and again in July and August. Cranking lipless or lipless crankbaits was used by winners in 15.2 percent of the tournaments.



Gear to Get

To watch Tommy Biffle pitch a soft-plastic to flooded cover, or Denny Brauer take apart a dock with his flipping technique, is to watch a craftsman at work.

Biffle, of Oklahoma, and Brauer, of Missouri, are veteran pros and considered by many to be the masters of pitching and flipping, respectively.

Tommy Biffle's Pitching Gear: A 7½-foot

medium-heavy Quantum Signature Series Rod, Quantum Tour Edition bait-caster (7:1 gear ratio) and 25-pound-test Sunline Shooter fluorocarbon.

Denny Brauer's Flipping Gear: A 7½-foot medium-heavy Rodsmith Signature Series Perfect Flipping Stick and an Ardent F700 Signature Series flipping and pitching bait-casting reel. Brauer prefers to use a 25-pound-test Seaguar fluorocarbon in clear water and 60-pound-test braid in dingy water.

Read Sign

The best fishermen don't just fish; they interpret what they see and hear around them. Here are some of the visible and audible signs that might help you catch more bass.

- » **Lots of shorebirds**, such as heron and egrets, suggests plenty of bait-fish. Find the birds and you'll find the fish.
- » When current is running, an **isolated eddy near the surface** means there's some type of



- cover that might be holding a bucketmouth.
- » **Schools of shad** along the shoreline of a cove in spring indicate that they're spawning and attracting bass.
- » **Minnows showering up** from the water are a sure sign that bass are attacking them from below.
- » **Sudden bulges in the water** here and there under aquatic weeds signal the presence of feeding bass.
- » **Wind-caused ripples** that end in still water mark structure such as a drop-off or submerged weed bed—such borders hold bass.

More Online!

From the Bob Crupi 22-plus-pound fish to Paul Duclos' Spring Lake 24-pounder to Manabu Kurita's new world record, see history's best bass at **outdoorlife.com/best-bassever**

Illustrations: Chris Armstrong; photos: David J. Sams/Windigoimages.com (rods), iStock (heron)

EXTREME Adventures

Camping With Kids EA1
Cooking Light EA6
Camp Essentials EA8



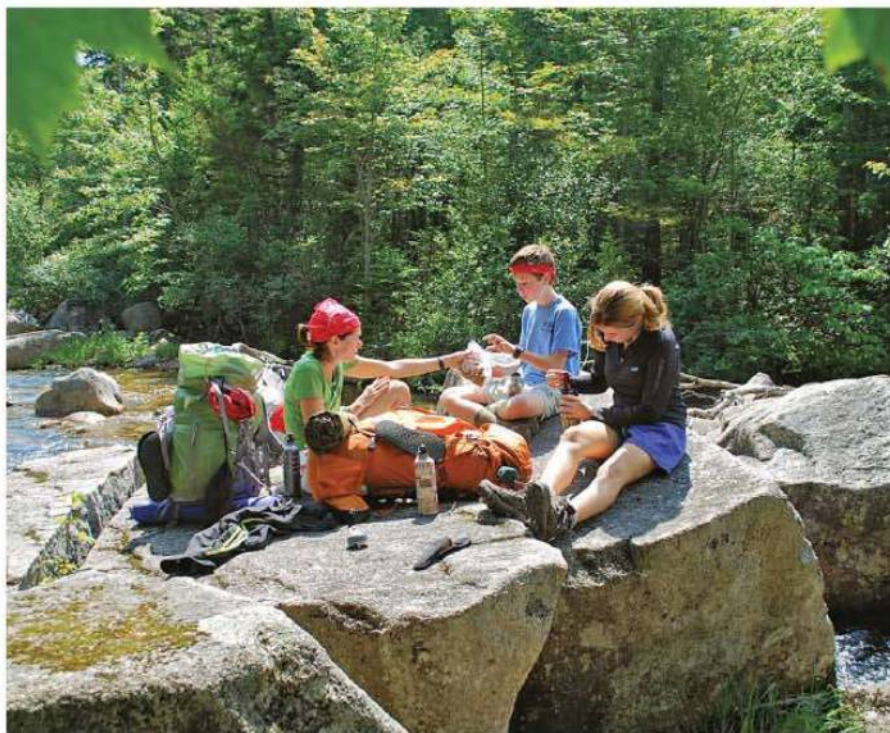
Backpacking Made Easy

A family wilderness getaway is fun and easy, *if you plan well*

BY TODD SMITH

ACCORDING TO THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION, more than 39 million people (that's 14 percent of the entire U.S. population) went camping in 2008. That number is expected to keep growing as families continue to be mindful of how they spend their vacation dollars in 2010.

Todd Smith



Finding a nice place to take a break, with a view and ready water source, is always a plus. Note the red bandannas, which are treated with Insect Shield to thwart bugs.

the Baxter website, we even learned that there would be canoes available to rent once we got there. Flyfishing for native brook trout would also be possible. And since camping permits were by reservation only, we wouldn't be bumping into a lot of people along the way.

The Baxter folks were very nice and well organized. However, we also discovered that if you're planning on doing a hike that requires reservations, you need to start early. Weekends fill up fast, and forget about July Fourth or Labor Day. Fortunately, we found several weekday openings for the site we wanted, so it worked out fine, but you should definitely book early.

What to Bring

Outfitting the family was really fun. Everyone already had good raingear, except my wife. But a quick purchase from Cloudveil had her outfitted in a lightweight shell and pants.

We have a whole bunch of sleeping bags, so I just tried to concentrate on bringing my lightest models to save weight.

Most of the backpacking items you'll need can be easily purchased online (REI, EMS, Campmor, Cabela's and Bass Pro Shop are all good sources). SierraTradingPost.com also offers great discounts on many items. But for boots and packs, visit your local backpacking store.

However, the questions I've heard from so many people (including my wife) are: Where do I begin? And what kind of gear do I need?

I've been backpacking since I was a kid. My trips—first with the Boy Scouts, then later, as an adult—seemed stupidly easy. You picked a place and you went. However, when my 15-year-old daughter asked if I'd take our family on a backpacking vacation last year, I suddenly realized that it takes a little more planning (and purchasing) to get a family of four down the trail. The lessons I learned, however, will hopefully make your planning that much easier. And the payoff, as they say, is priceless.

Pick a Perfect Place

I started by asking just about everyone I knew who backpacked where they would recommend we go. I explained that although we'd done a lot of car camping, this would be my family's first backpack trip. I wanted something suitable for beginners, not the Pacific Crest Trail. On the advice of a friend, we chose the hike in to Russell Pond in Maine's Baxter State Park.

The hike, according to my source, would be easy (read: flat). It finished at a lovely lake where we would camp, something that fulfilled my requirement that we have a special destination to hike to. Jumping on



Tents, Packs & Pads

We took two 4-season tents with us—when the rains came hammering down our first night away, we stayed nice and dry. In foreground: **Hilleberg** Kaitum 2 tent with **Osprey** Ace 48 (red) and **Gregory** Deva packs. In background: Hilleberg Allak tent with Arc'Teryx Altra 65 (copper) and Gregory Jade packs. There are many lightweight alternatives available from Black Diamond, MSR, Go-Lite, Kelty, Eureka and others. See our tent test at outdoorlife.com/photos/gallery/gear/camping/2009/07/best-new-tents for more models.

A good sleeping pad is a must. Excellent lightweight choices are available from **Thermarest** and **Big Agnes**.

Todd Smith



You are only over-equipped if you never do anything.

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Fit Comes First

There is nothing worse than getting blisters two miles down the trail. Boots that fit are a must, and the only way you can be sure they really fit is to try them on. You'll be surprised at the way different models feel. And try them on with a good wicking sock—the same kind you'll be hiking in.

Women's feet are narrower, so you need to take that into consideration. Iowa's Lady GTX boots fit my wife's feet well. For my daughter, we went with a pair of Salomons from EMS. For my son, whose feet are still growing, we purchased a pair of Merrells at our local backpacking shop that were on sale, since he'll like get only a single season's use out of them.

Packs need to be fit the same way. We spent a lot of time at REI with a very helpful salesperson who took all of our measurements. The girls both found that the Deva and Jade from Gregory (designed specifically for women) fit them best. (Gregory also has a great tutorial on how to fit a backpack. Go to gregorypacks.com/technology/philosophy for illustrated steps.)

My son used the Osprey Ace 48 we had gotten him for Scouts the year before, and I used Arc'Teryx's new Altra 65, which has a comfortable swivel bellyband system. The important thing was that all of our packs fit us really well.

Stoves and Cook Kits

We took a lightweight Brunton Bantam and my tried-and-true Coleman Peak 1. Both are lightweight, run on white gas and are extremely efficient. It's also nice to have redundancy. We used two 2-person cook kits from GSI Outdoors and MSR. Both were very lightweight and have excellent nesting pots and cups. If I had to do it over again, however, I'd probably go with a single 4-person cookset, as all of our meals were one-pot anyway, and it would have made cooking for four easier.

One absolute must, for my family at least, is GSI's Javapress. We also found an 8-cup enamel coffee pot (from Cabela's) handy for boiling water in a hurry.

Water

Practically anywhere you go, you're going to need to purify your water. We used two systems. The first was a **Platypus Clean Stream** gravity filter (from Cascade Designs). It's easy to use and purifies 4 liters of water in about 2 minutes without any pumping.

To make doubly sure (and to fill water bottles along the trail), we also used a **Steripen Journey LCD Water Purifier**.

This device uses ultraviolet light to destroy nasty microbes. Just hold it in your water bottle, click it on and stir. The LCD screen gives you a happy face when your water's ready to drink. It's fast and easy.



Bug Repellents

We used several different bug-thwarting products. The girls both wore shirts that had been treated with Insect Shield (insectshield.com), and all of us used bandannas that had also been treated. This stuff really works. It's an odorless anti-insect treatment that's built into dozens of garments and other gear.

The other items I took (and I would never go anywhere again without them) were two portable insect-repellent appliances from Thermacell (available at Cabela's, Bass Pro and the big-box stores). These are lightweight, and with two you can keep an entire campsite practically bug-free. Finally, Ben's 100. Yes, I know, DEET is frowned on in some circles, but this stuff really works—especially when you're on the trail.

Don't Overdo It

My last piece of advice is to take it easy on your first trip. While our hike looked easy on paper (my source told me we'd do it in about four hours), I should have known better when I saw

the mileage estimate to the campsite at 8 miles one way and 9 the other. I also noted there would be two river crossings going in.

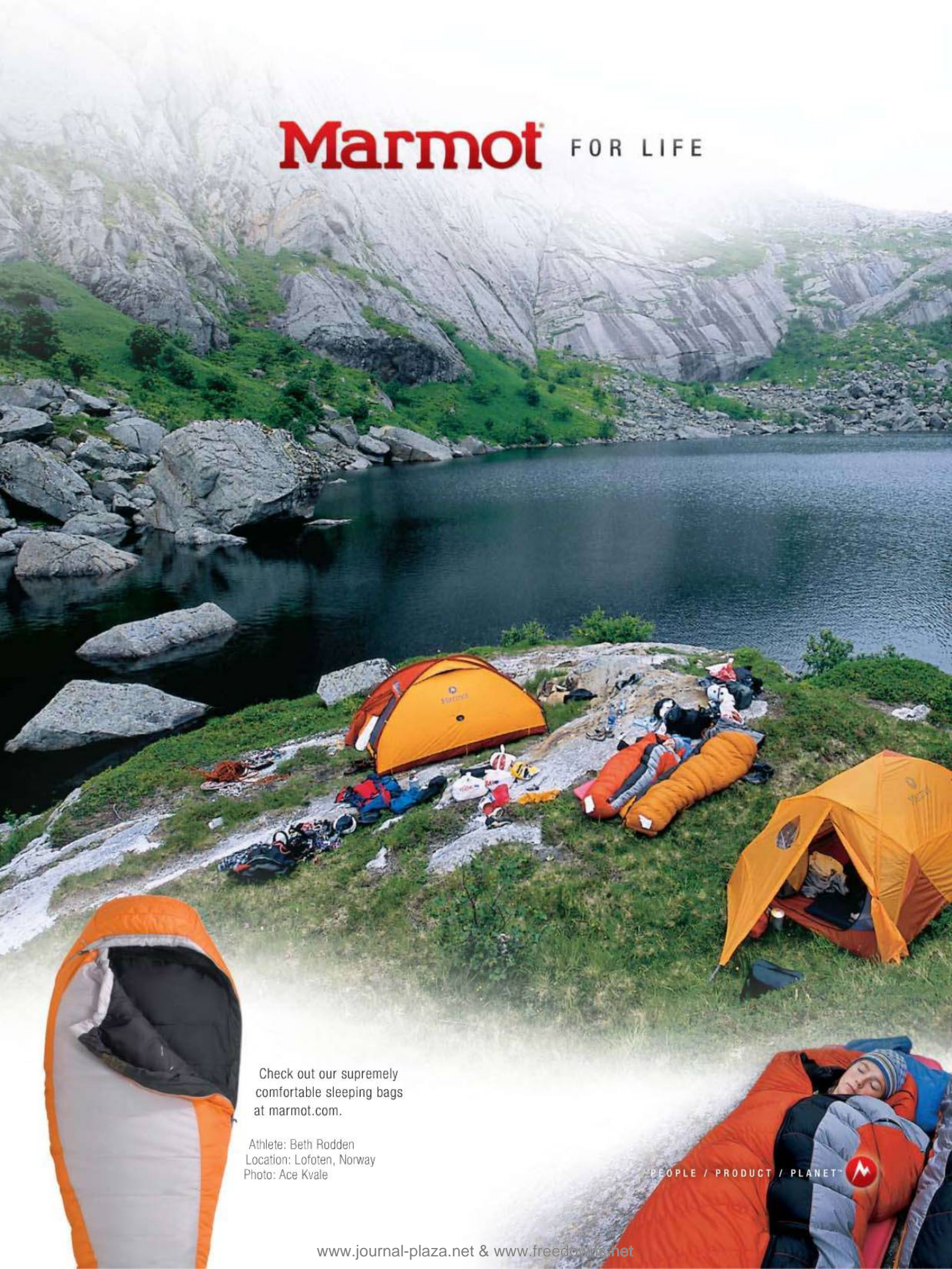
Turns out the first crossing was pretty easy, but the second portage, which was made late in the day when everybody was getting tired, was tough. We lost flip-flops (definitely not a good footwear choice on stream crossings—Crocs, with a strap, work much better) and soaked our bottoms, but we made it and even managed to keep our packs dry.

On the plus side, our campsite was gorgeous. We had plenty of room to ourselves. The view of the lake was fantastic, and the canoeing (for \$1 an hour on the honor system), fishing and wildlife viewing were incredible. We even had a moose walk right through our camp.

Our kids had a blast on the trip and my wife said that she'd do it again, so we're already planning a camping adventure in the Adirondacks for this summer.

Todd Smith

Marmot FOR LIFE



Check out our supremely comfortable sleeping bags at marmot.com.

Athlete: Beth Rodden
Location: Lofoten, Norway
Photo: Ace Kvale

PEOPLE / PRODUCT / PLANET™



GEAR

Cooking Light

Lightweight cook kits make meal prep easy **BY THE EDITORS**



MSR Quick 2 System

\$100; cascadedesigns.com

MATERIAL: Non-stick uncoated aluminum

WEIGHT: 28 oz.

INCLUDES: 1.5-liter nonstick DuraLite DX pot, 2.5-liter hard-anodized pot, strainer lid, DeepDish plates, insulated stainless-steel mugs, Talon pot handle.

COMMENTS: Well designed; nicest cups anywhere. Our favorite of the four.



Snow Peak Multi-Compact

\$30; snowpeak.com

MATERIAL: Aluminum

WEIGHT: 17.1 oz.

INCLUDES: Large 32-oz. pot/lid; small 23-oz. pot/lid. Lids can serve as frying pans.

COMMENTS: The bare essentials here, but enough to get you through a rugged weekend. Folding handles make nesting easy, and the kits fit in a mesh bag for quick drying.



Pinnacle Backpacker

\$80; gsioutdoors.com

MATERIAL: Non-stick coated aluminum

WEIGHT: 27.9 oz.

INCLUDES: 2-liter pot, 8-inch frypan, strainer lid, 14 fl. oz. insulated mugs, 14 fl. oz. bowls, Sip-It tops, folding pot gripper

COMMENTS: Teflon coating makes clean-ups a breeze; the Pinnacle Backpacker is even dishwasher-safe.



Coleman Family Cook Set

\$35; coleman.com

MATERIAL: Non-stick coated hard steel

WEIGHT: 6.9 lbs.

INCLUDES: 6.5-quart kettle and 2-quart saucepan, interchangeable skillet/kettle lid with draining slits, 10 inch skillet

COMMENTS: Heavier than other kits, but ergonomically designed flip-top handles are convenient for packing.

REDISCOVER THE ROAD TRIP.

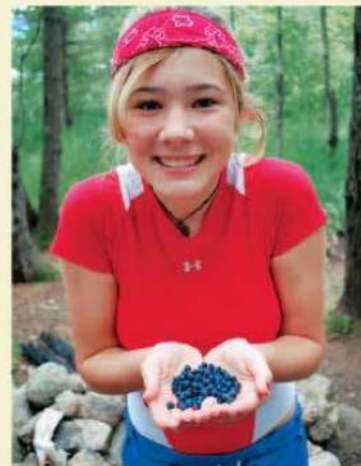


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TRAIL GOURMET

Blueberry Pancakes

An old friend gave me this recipe for pancakes years ago. It's still the best I've found. —T. S.

Sift together:

- *1 cup flour
- *½ Tbs. baking soda
- *¾ Tbs. baking powder
- *1 Tbs. sugar

Blend together:

- *1 egg
- *1 cup buttermilk
- *2 Tbs. melted butter
- *Add blueberries to taste

Todd Smith (blueberries)



Always have to urinate at all the wrong times?

Revolutionary new drug-free formula for men helps you regain your youthful prostate function so you'll urinate less often and boost your quality of life sky high!

Are you a man who constantly needs to urinate? Do you have trouble starting your stream? Do you have to get up once or more during the night to urinate? Are your male urination problems ruining your quality of life? If you suffer with these types of prostate problems, don't give up hope because now there's good news! Introducing **Prostalex Plus**, the amazing new all-natural supplement for men that helps solve your urination problems, improve prostate function, and boost prostate health so you won't need to urinate as often, you'll enhance urination function, and you'll finally be able to sleep through the night without any trips to the bathroom!

Powerful new formula helps end your urination problems

The amazing new Prostalex Plus drug-free supplement has been scientifically formulated to reduce your need to urinate by combating the natural growth of your prostate, which occurs naturally as you age and is the cause of most urination problems in men. Containing rare, high-potency, all-natural ingredients, the Prostalex Plus formula is unique because it not only stops your constant need to urinate, it helps improve your ability to urinate (so you'll no longer have trouble getting your stream to start), and it helps you maintain a healthy prostate. That means, with Prostalex Plus you can enjoy the freedom of not having to search out a men's room wherever you go, enjoy the luxury of uninterrupted sleep, and enjoy the peace of mind that goes along with having a healthy, youthful, optimally-functioning prostate.

Countless men are raving about Prostalex Plus

Prostalex Plus is the safe, private, all-natural solution that's giving men the results they want without drugs, surgery, or side effects. Just listen to what some of our satisfied customers are saying about Prostalex Plus:

"I used to get up more than 6 times a night. Now I don't have to get up even once!" —Michael P.

"I almost had to quit my job as a truck driver, but now I can go for hours and hours without having to look for a bathroom." —Larry D.

"All my urination problems—urgency, frequency, low flow, dribble—they're totally gone now!" —Jonathan S.

If you want to regain your youthful prostate function, stop having to urinate all the time, and enjoy night after night of uninterrupted sleep, Prostalex Plus is perfect for you.

Risk-Free Trial

Call toll-free now for your risk-free trial of Prostalex Plus!

Contact your doctor or call the company directly toll-free now and you can get a risk-free trial of Prostalex Plus (sent to you in plain, discreet packaging). That way you can see for yourself how effective and powerful the Prostalex Plus formula really is! Call toll-free now at 1-800-543-0628.

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Walgreens

GNC LiveWell.

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food & Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

www.journal-plaza.net & www.freedowns.net

BASICS

Camp Essentials

Try these ultra-light options in the backcountry this summer



1. BASE LAYER Grab a PHASE AR crew shirt from Arc'Teryx on the days when you need an athletic-weight layer. (\$65; arcteryx.com)

2. MID-LAYER Under Armour's Base 2.0 top is the company's most relaxed fit and also has scent suppression technology. (\$40; underarmour.com)

3. SHELL Cloudveil's hardshell Doublet Jacket provides great storm protection. (\$250; cloudveil.com)

4. BOTTOMS Simms' Superlight Zip-Off pants can be worn as long pants or shorts. (\$80; simms.com)

5. ROD AND REEL White River Fly Shop's graphite spin/fly travel combo lets you switch from fly rod to spinning rod. (\$90; basspro.com)

6. BOOTS LOWA makes a whole line of hiking boots with Gore-Tex. The Khumbu GTX are great for summer treks. (\$245; lowaboos.com)

7. HEADGEAR A classic camping bandanna, but with modern Insect Shield bug-repellent technology. (\$12; insectshield.com)

AND DON'T FORGET...

8. Drymax socks (\$10-\$20; drymax.com);

9. Energy bars (\$3; theprobar.com); **10.** Bollé's Venom shades (\$60; bolle.com); **11.** Brunton's Helios Stormproof lighter (\$85; brunton.com); **12.** Petzl's Tikka Plus headlamp (\$40; petzl.com); **13.** SOG's Micro ToolClip (\$20; sognknives.com); **14.** Thermacell's bug-repellent appliance (\$25; mosquitorepellent.com)

Eddie Berman

OUTDOORSMEN:

PROMOTION

Do you have constant **RINGING** in your ear?



Finally, new discovery for quiet relief!

A breakthrough by a rock drummer finds combination of scientifically advanced ingredients combined with homeopathy to relieve the ringing, which could save thousands from risky and expensive treatments.

Every night for almost 18 years, if I couldn't find a fan, turn on a tv or find loud static from a vacant radio station, then sleeping was impossible. The high-pitched ringing, buzzing and humming kept me up at night. Sluggishness, tiredness and lost energy would be my nemesis the next day. I couldn't take it - it was a major problem. I couldn't sleep. I couldn't concentrate. I heard it constantly, I couldn't hide from it...It drove me nuts! Headaches, depressive mood swings, testiness, constant state of anxiety. Due to the tenacity of Tinnitus (the ringing in the ears from exposure to loud noises, or in my case, pounding on drums and loud distorted guitar amps behind my head for years), I was determined to find real, pure, silent relief and I did with Quietus™...

Tinnitus - Who's at RISK?

- Carpentry & Construction
- Mining, Drilling & Farming
- Firearms Enthusiasts
- Residential Landscapers
- iPod Users
- Machine Operators
- Night Club Workers
- Musicians

The symptoms of Tinnitus are real. I had what 1 out of 6 Americans get: the symptoms associated with Tinnitus (*ti-nahy-tuh s*) from loud noises that worsen as you age, and in many cases lead to hearing loss.



Silence is now music to my ears.

I tried everything from hearing aid sound generators to ginkgo biloba, zinc and magnesium mineral doses to bio feedback. Some of these things helped reduce the ringing, but nothing worked short of expensive, risky surgery. Not until I discovered the active all-natural ingredients of my new homeopathic product Quietus, did my prolonged ear ringing finally silence.

"RELIEVE the ringing, CALM the hissing. Let peace & mental clarity begin."

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(Continued from page 5)

I was reading *Outdoor Life* for a school project and saw the article "The Elements of Survival." I really liked the part on making fire.

It gave a lot of information and I thought it was well written. It included a lot of helpful stuff that I can use, some of which I have already used. This article was very interesting and it will make starting survival fires easier. It taught me other ways I can start fires and what things I can use.

I really took a lot out of this issue and enjoyed the theme. I think this information can help a lot of people. I hope there will be more articles like this and look forward to more issues of the magazine. It is one of my favorites.

Brandon Marshall, Pendleton, OR

Thorns and Roses Todd Smith's article about his Boy Scout troop getting a sobering taste of a bad storm [Editor's Journal, March] really hit home with me.

At the Monday meeting immediately following their monthly campout, my son's Scouts troop always does a Start/Stop/Continue routine, which is the process of calling out good new things—like food or gear from the campout—as well as issues and items that need to be changed to make the next trip better. I'd recommend that outdoor enthusiasts apply the same concept after each outing.

Ted J. Lenaerts, Cedar Falls, IA

Sleepless and Sea-Addled These guys have a good "sea story" ["Lost at Sea," March], but it left me with some questions. If the last guy to fall asleep was asleep less than a half hour—and awakened to calf-deep water aboard—that tells me the boat leaked like a sieve. The bilge had to be pumping constantly before the faulty switch konked out.

Also, why were all three crewmembers sleeping at the same time? And, fishing 75 miles offshore—at night—without an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon seems irresponsible.

Bob Embach, Woodstock, IL



Jeff Deane
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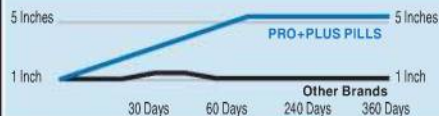
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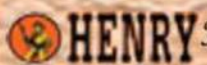
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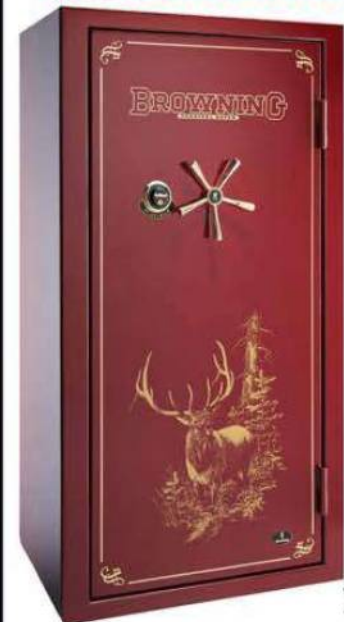
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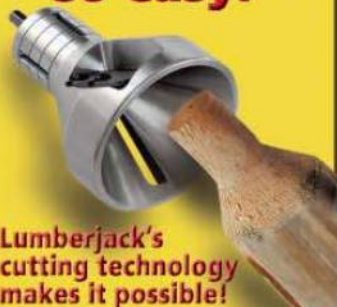
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MIXED MARTIAL ARTS STAR RANDY Couture is as hardcore as they come. As a master in-ring competitor and the only five-time champion in the history of the UFC, he is considered by many to be the greatest fighter of all time.

He's also an army veteran and founder of the training organization Xtreme Couture. But when he has downtime in his schedule, he prefers the relative serenity of the outdoors.

OL: How did you start hunting?

COUTURE: I started when I was five or six years old. I come from a divorced

family, so hunting was one of the few times a year when I got to see my father. The two of us would get together for a week or more and hunt; that was our special time together.

OL: Where do you like to hunt?

COUTURE: I grew up in Seattle, so when I was young, we'd hunt in the Cascades. Now I'm fortunate to own property in Colorado. I've also been to Argentina for stag, doves, pheasants and rabbits.

OL: Do you have any favorite animals to hunt?

COUTURE: Traditionally, elk are my favorite, but I suppose that's because they've always eluded me. I got close to getting one this year, but not quite.

OL: Do you do any fishing?

COUTURE: In Seattle I was about 20 minutes from Puget Sound. I used to

go crabbing and salmon fishing around there. I've also done some sturgeon and steelhead fishing in Oregon.

OL: Any dream hunt that you have your sights set on?

COUTURE: I'd love to hunt in New Zealand. Our springtime here in the U.S. is when New Zealand's rut happens. I'd love to get a stag.

OL: Do fighting and hunting complement each other?

COUTURE: There are elements of fighting that translate to archery and hunting. The patience, for example, as well as staying calm and focused.

OL: How do you balance your training with hunting?

COUTURE: It's a juggling act. I've missed hunting seasons in the past because I had to focus on a fight. Fortunately, I now have a great staff helping me, so it's easier to balance the two.

Courtesy Randy Couture

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